Happy Holidays!

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013

From Cuba to US

A Local Man's Facinating Story

Young José with his parents & sister

By Frank Pizzoli

On New Year's Eve 1959, when Fidel Castro's soldiers finally defeated corrupt Cuban President Fulgencio Batista, the seeds of the Cuban revolution were planted.

The seeds that would eventually blossom into the beliefs of Harrisburg's Dr. José Venereo were also planted.

As a Cuban, José faced a family history recounted only in whispers.

"I was very young when much of this family history took place. They did not talk in great detail. This was a traumatic time for my family. Their houses and land were confiscated under Castro's policy of redistributing wealth," José tells *Central Voice*.

As a gay child, he navigated a Latin culture built on strong masculinity and religious values. As a gay man, he later found a home in south central Pennsylvania; now a successful veterinarian and owner of Noah's Ark Veterinary Center.

Dr. José Venereo

Born into revolution

The Cuban Revolution was an armed revolt against the government of Cuban President Fulgencio Batista conducted by Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement and its allies. The revolt began in July 1953 and finally ousted Batista on Jan. 1, 1959, replacing his government with Castro's revolutionary state.

Castro's government formed along Communist lines. By 1965, his armed revolution had become the Communist Party of Cuba, today headed by Castro's brother Raúl who rules the island 90 miles from the coast of Jose's adopted home.

In 1967, against this tumultuous background, José was born in Cuba. By then his father, also named Jose, had been a political prisoner of Castro for almost eight years. He was a tobacco grower who expressed his disapproval of the dictator's takeover. Fueling Castro's revolution was Batista's slide into corruption as he befriended the US Mob. Although he was popularly elected for his first run, Batista cancelled the second election and took over Cuba by means of a military coup. "Castro found his power by fighting Batista's corrupt government. Only after taking power did he, Batista, show his true colors," José explained.

In a story from a Hollywood script, José's father met and eventually married the daughter of an anti-Castro military sergeant with whom he was jailed. Both Jose's grandfathers were successful Cubans who met the Castro regime's disfavor.

The jails of revolutionaries are known for their cruelty.

"They put sugar on one side of moldy bread. There were often cockroaches on the other side of the bread," José explained.

"During those early years of Communist rule the regime's control over the hearts

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ANALYSIS: Gay *and* Progressive?

By Frank Pizzoli

"It's profoundly disquieting that in the midst of the current economic crisis, you have no idea that the recession had an impact on our community," Amber Hollibaugh, Queers for Economic Justice, said recently when addressing media.

"It makes me insane, because this idea that all LGBT people are wealthy, and mostly white is a dangerous myth," she said. There were 46.5 million people living in poverty in 2012. That means about 1.4 million of them were in the gay community.

Another myth exploded Aug. 24: That African Americans and the LGBT community are at loggerheads. That day gay leaders were among the 10,000 people gathered at the Lincoln Memorial commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

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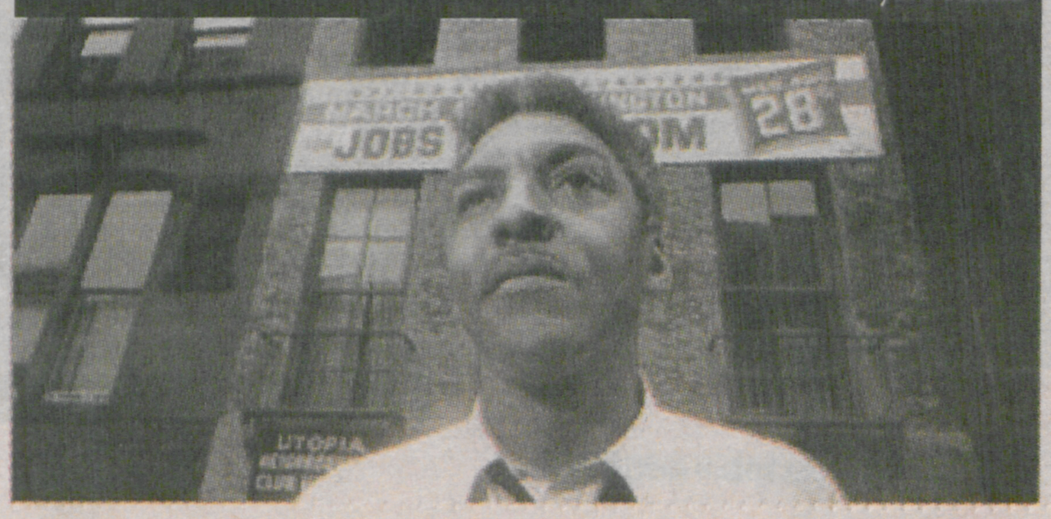
"...we need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers."
-Bayard Rustin



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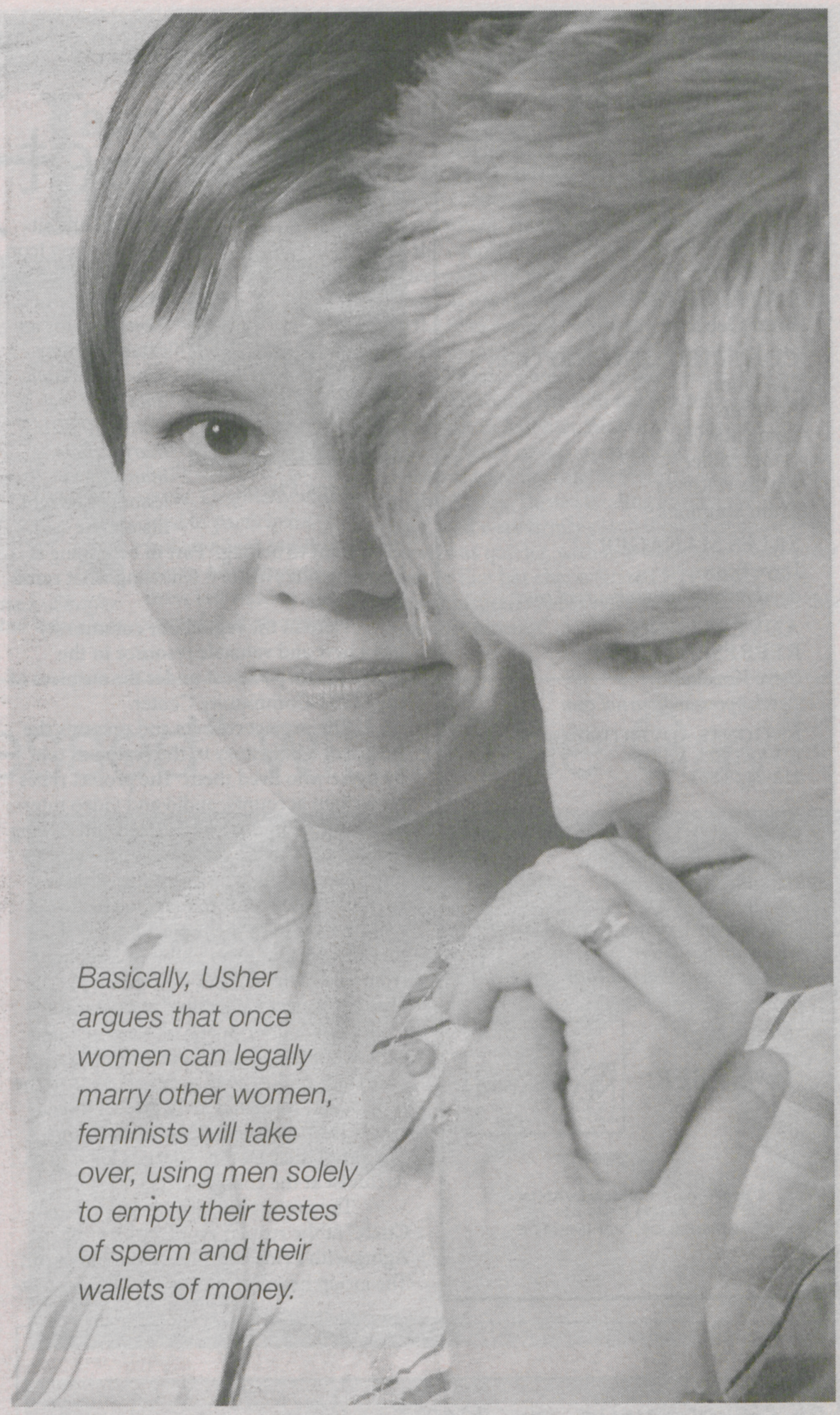
Those devious lesbians



Basically, Usher argues that once women can legally marry other women, feminists will take over, using men solely to empty their testes of sperm and their wallets of money.

By D'Anne Witkowski

Think back to all of the times you've heard straight women say things like, "Ugh, I wish I could be a lesbian, it would be so much easier." And have you ever wondered why Judy Brady's "I Want A Wife" essay from the early 70s is required reading in any and all Women's Studies classes? Because ladies ain't want no husbands. Oh, but ladies do want babies. If only there existed a way for women to marry each other, yet still be able to get some impregnating dick on the side…

Thankfully, David Usher, president of the Center for Marriage Policy, has it all figured out and he mansplained the whole thing in an Aug. 21 post on Renew America's website.

Basically, Usher argues that once women can legally marry other women, feminists will take over, using men solely to empty their testes of sperm and their wallets of money.

Usher claims there's no such thing as marriage equality, and that such a thing would actually create three classes of marriage, with lesbians benefiting over heterosexuals and gay men because women would marry each other as part of a diabolical scheme to enslave men.

"Most women will bear children by men outside the [same-sex] marriage – often by pretending they are using birth control when they are not. Entrapped men become economically-conscripted third parties to these marriages, but get nothing in return," Usher writes.

I'd like to point out Usher's use of the words "most" and "often." He's not saying, "Hey, here's a crazy thing that could happen maybe." He's saying, "This is definitely going to happen and it's going to happen the majority of the time." Which is totally insane.

Usher continues, "This is a significant advantage compelling women who would otherwise become (or are) single mothers to choose to marry a woman instead of a man. They can combine incomes, double-up on tax-free child support and welfare benefits, decrease costs, and double the human resources available to raise children and run their household." He even adds that lesbos in name only (LINOs) would "often" keep boyfriends on the side and take their money, too.

The bottom line? Clever bitches be hustlin'.

And it's not just straight men in danger here. Usher argues, "In most cases, [gay] men will become un-consenting 'fathers' by reproductive entrapment." How a woman tricks a gay man into knocking her up is not made clear, however, he does use the word "most," which means he believes that the majority of gay men will become duped daddies.

Creep of the Week:

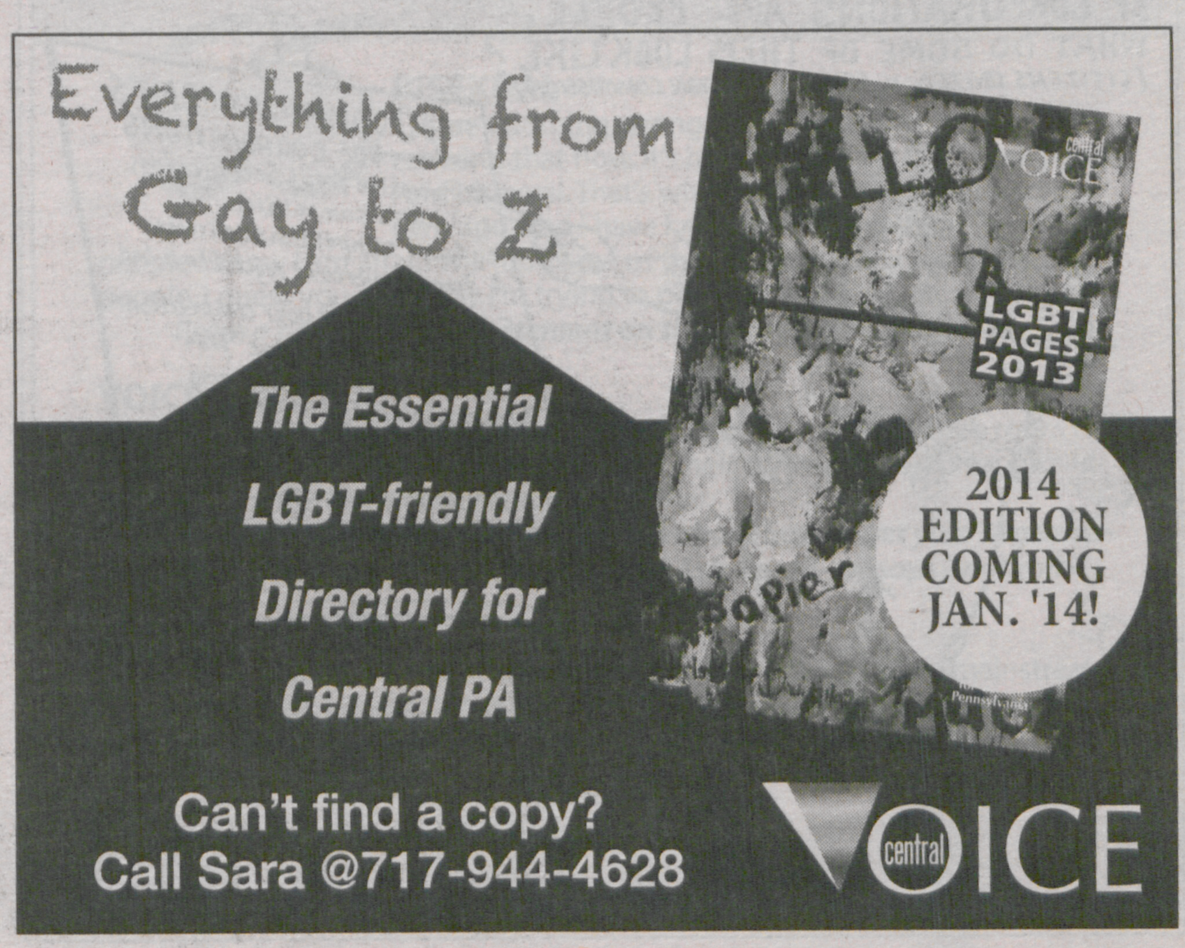
David Usher

If same-sex marriage is legalized Usher says, "economic advantage will still drive women's marital decisions," because, duh, women were gold diggers before marriage equality and they'll be gold diggers after it, too. And so women will become a bunch of welfare dykes getting knocked up with bastard children for the fat government bennies.

Usher claims that men will be "redlined" out of marriage and the "welfare state" will spiral out of control, putting the burden of supporting all of these penis-free families on the dwindling heterosexual tax base.

There's nothing more terrifying to a right-wing nut than a lesbian couple raising children on welfare, which Usher makes very clear when he writes, "This is far more dangerous than ObamaCare, abortion, capital punishment, or excessive gun regulations."

Something worse than ObamaCare? Than abortion? Than gun control? Considering Usher's essay is titled, "Our last chance to save traditional marriage," I would say he is doomed. But he certainly does have one hell of an imagination.



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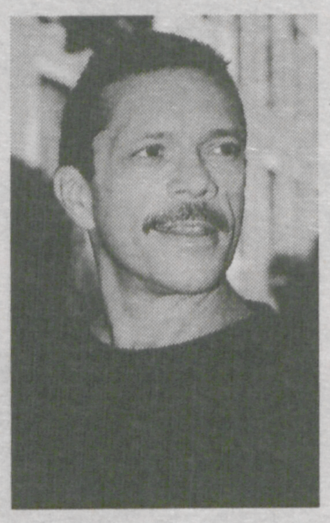
publisher's note

Get Your History On



Frank Pizzoli

While sitting with gay icon Martin Duberman, author of *Stonewall*, for an extended interview *www.lambdaliterary.org/features/09/01/martin-duberman-history-lessons/* - on lgbt history, he said, "You want to belong." Part of belonging is knowing one's history. Knowing what came before you.

Here in the region our community has a new and valuable resource in the LGBT History Project under the auspices of the LGBT Community Center.

The project collects and presents the stories of lgbt history in the region as told by those who lived them. The project relies on written accounts, audio and video interviews, photographs and artifacts illustrating the stories. The plan is to weave the stories together creating a historical timeline and narrative context for the region's history.

Last month the project hosted "History Comes Out, An Exhibit of Selections from The LGBT Center of Central PA History Project Collection" at Dickinson College's Waidner-Spahr Library. The free exhibit contained selections from recent donations of documents and artifacts to the project and was curated by project intern and Dickinson student Mana Shaw, and Malinda Triller Doran, Special Collections Archivist at the college.

The project has also hosted a "Story Circle" at the regular monthly meeting of Aging with Pride, another center endeavor. The group heard about early LGBT organizing efforts through the creation of the PA Rural Gay Caucus and other organizations in central and eastern Pennsylvania. Those assembled also heard recollections of an owner of several gay bars in Harrisburg.

Collecting all this local history through oral recollections is a formidable task.

"There's a two-part process to our collecting an oral history," explains Lonna Malmsheimer, a retired Dickinson professor who taught oral history and lgbt issues. Malmsheimer and Amy Skillman head up the project. Both hold advanced history and American Studies degrees with extensive oral history experience. Barry Loveland serves as project chair.

The project uses a standard questionnaire to gather demographics and then asks participants a series of "prompt" questions. "We'd like to know how a person first connected to the region's lgbt community, how they've involved themselves with groups and organizations," Malmsheimer explains.

"We'll even explore participants' pre- and post-Stonewall political and social activity so we can show the contrast," Malmsheimer says. On the personal side, if comfortable, participants will be asked about family relations and their own questioning and coming out experiences.

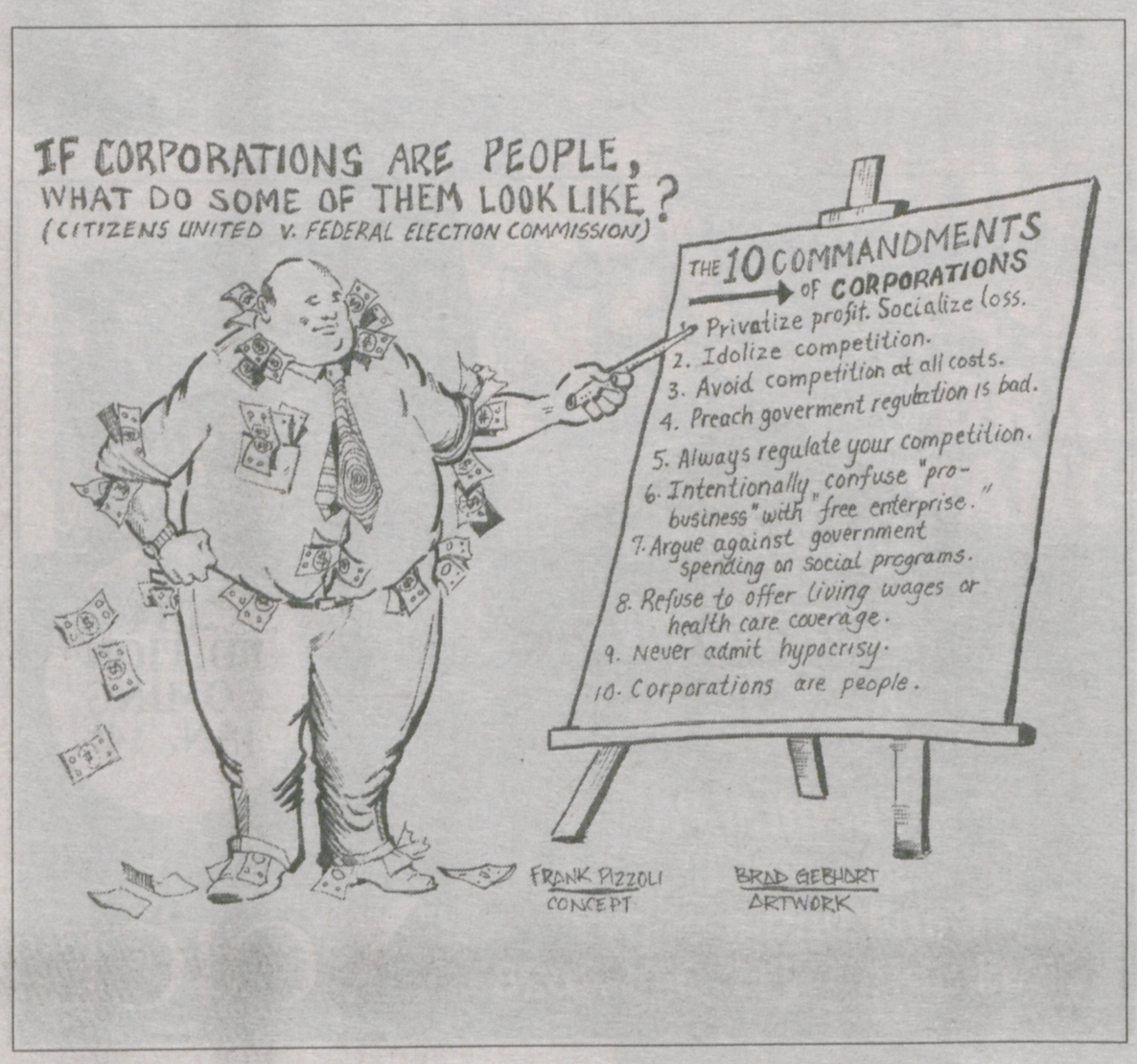
Eventually, the region's lgbt history will be presented on the center's web site and as an exhibit in the center gallery.

The project seeks people to sharing their stories and artifacts. Volunteers will receive training in how to interview storytellers, transcribe oral histories. The project also needs hard cash financial support and in-kind donations.

Loveland wanted to chair the effort "because I realized that many trailblazers from our local lgbt community are no longer with us. Others, like myself, are graying," he says. He's always enjoyed hearing "the stories" and a few years ago Loveland assembled a panel of elders for Common Roads, the center's youth group. "Panelists had even more fun reminiscing than the youth did hearing the stories," he remembers. The experience prompted him to writing down some of that history in order to create a framework for local history. Dignity/Central PA has provided a $1,200 seed grant.

Get your history on and join the effort. Share your important story.

Info: www.centralpalgbtcenter.org



LGBT Immigrants Stand Up for Dignity and Respect

By Omar Garcia

On October 5, I was one of the thousands of voices in a national chorus. Across 80 cities, we mobilized for the National Day for Dignity and Respect on behalf of our nation's 11 million undocumented men, women and children – saying the time for comprehensive, compassionate immigration is now.

Back in 2008, I watched other immigrants like me come out of the shadows. After spending more than half of my life in the shadows myself, I decided to join them. Now, as a gay DREAMer I stood up on October 5th to say to the 267,000 who are undocumented and lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT), that the country we love shouldn't make us live in two closets anymore.

We are massing by the thousands– gay and straight, undocumented and citizens, labor and business, left and right – across America so our voices together won't get lost in the din of politics or posturing. We want nothing less than an achievable path to eventual legal status for 11 million aspiring citizens, including the 267,000 LGBT immigrants among us.

Poll after poll shows the American voters – including a majority of Republicans – are with us. We want our broken immigration system to be fixed, a balanced approach to reform, and a path to citizenship. That's why the Senate passed a bipartisan bill back in July, which while far from perfect, should have paved the way for continued momentum on behalf of this urgent issue.

Instead, immigration reform has become a political football as it moved to the House. Leaders – including those who trumpet the importance of family – have stood idly by as 1,100 immigrant families are torn apart by deportations each day. But this week, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi said she would bring a comprehensive immigration bill to her colleagues in the House.

LGBT immigrants like myself, face unique challenges, like the inability to gain citizenship for our spouses in most states. That's why Equality PA is supporting the bipartisan Senate bill that includes several provisions that would be particularly beneficial for the LGBT community. The bill would eliminate the one-year bar on applying for asylum; improve the conditions for people held in detention facilities; and limit the use of solitary confinement and prohibiting the use of this practice based solely on a detainees' sexual orientation or gender identity.

It's not enough to offer undocumented immigrants work permits, instead of full citizenship. That approach would >

Harrisburg Mayoral Debate: *"I wish this was over already."*

From left: Jennifer Kyoung, Alan Kennedy-Shaffer, Destini Hodges, all from Harrisburg Hope; Republican candidate Dan Miller, current city controller; Democratic Eric Papenfuse, and write-in hopeful Lewis Butts.

Alan Kennedy-Shaffer
Central Voice photo

In a panel debate whose lead-up had more twists than a bag of pretzels, Harrisburg Hope hosted about 150 in Harrisburg City's first mayoral candidate panel discussion in a hotly contested election cycle. Originally scheduled to participate, Independent candidate Nevin Mindlin withdrew last minute concerned that an appeals court had not yet issued its decision on whether or not he would remain on the ballot.

The long campaign has been forged against the backdrop of state-appointed receiver David Lynch cobbling together "Harrisburg Strong Plan" which, among other issues, formed much of the candidates' public debate. Individuals have referred to the plan as "Harrisburg Strong-arm Plan," as a way of saying financial pains called for in the plan are not evenly shared by all players. Some opine that city dwellers are hurt the most while losses by big finance players are paid back.

Although late into the program there were moments of laughter, noteworthy that evening was the tenor of the crowd as they assembled. Postures were definite: arms crossed as people sat in their seats. Those standing against the room's back wall were firmly planted on their spot. The room was quieter, with less warm meet-and-greet chatter that has characterized HH events. One man whispered to his event neighbor: "I wish this was over already."

Catholic Church "Obsessed" with "The Gay"

"This church with which we should be thinking is the home to all, not a small chapel that can hold only a small group of selected people. We must not reduce the bosom of the universal church to a nest protecting our mediocrity" - Pope Francis

I was glad to read in the New York Times (Sept. 20, 2013) reports that Pope Francis thinks his church is going too far with it's morality tales: "Pope Francis, in the first extensive interview of his six-month-old papacy, said that the Roman Catholic church had grown "obsessed" with preaching about abortion, gay marriage and contraception, and that he has chosen not to speak of those issues despite recriminations from some critics.

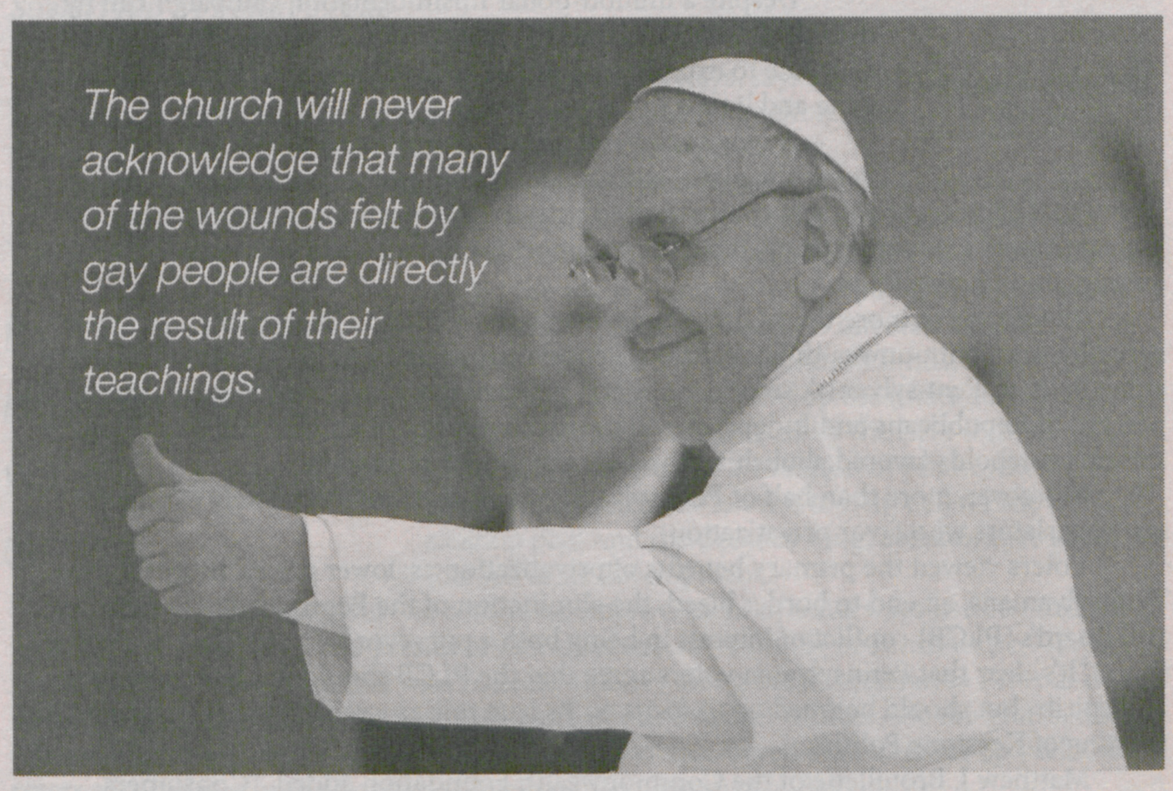
In remarkably blunt language, Francis sought to set a new tone for the church, saying it should be a "home for all" and not a "small chapel" focused on doctrine, orthodoxy and a limited agenda of moral teachings.

"It is not necessary to talk about these issues all the time," the Pope told the Rev. Antonio Spadaro, a fellow Jesuit and editor in chief of La Civiltà Cattolica, the Italian Jesuit journal whose content is routinely approved by the Vatican. "The dogmatic and moral teachings of the church are not all equivalent. The church's pastoral ministry cannot be obsessed with the transmission of a disjointed multitude of doctrines to be imposed insistently."

Pope Francis also said: "It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else."

Here's the deal breaker: Kinder, gentler words. Same old doctine. The church will never acknowledge that many of the wounds felt by gay people are directly the result of their teachings. They define gay people as intrinsically evil and as such cannot ever express their sexual desires. It is a sin to do so. In other words, the church cannot acknowledge that LGBT people do not adhere to the religious patronization "Hate the sin not the sinner". We are not sinners because we are homosexual. Do we commit sins as in doing bad things to ourselves or others? Of course, like all people. Is sexually expressing our homosexuality in and of itself a sin? No. When one homosexual lies to another homosexual about something, what's the sin? Being homosexual or lying? Lying, not being gay. Can the church finally get that? Please don't hold a seat for me at Mass.

- Former Roman Catholic reader



LGBT Immigrants *contd.*

relegate millions of people to a permanent underclass. It's not enough that you address the status of immigrant youth only, ignoring their families and friends who must continue to live in fear.

This is the best chance we've had in a generation to pass common-sense immigration reform. It's good policy: it modernizes our immigration system so it's safe, legal, orderly, and humane. It's also good economics: a Congressional Budget Office report shows that reform will grow our economy and reduce the deficit by almost a trillion dollars over two decades. And it's good politics: Democrats want reform to show they can deliver. Republicans need reform to get right with Latino, Asian, immigrant, youth, and independent voters. The country wants to know that both parties can work together to tackle tough challenges and get things done.

We have an historic opportunity to get it done and get it right. We are on the right side of history. Will you join me as we say all Americans, aspiring and citizen alike, are deserving of dignity and respect?

Omar Garcia, 23, came to the US with his family from Mexico more than a decade ago. He now lives in Harrisburg working three jobs and volunteering to promote immigrants' rights.

voice box

BISEXUAL

"There's nothing wrong with being who you are. I'm realizing that now. It's hard for me though, to tell people I am bisexual. That's why I only tell people around my own age who I have known for a long time. The older people I know I am afraid will judge me as they are just really judgmental people. I guess you could say I'm trying to protect myself."

From a personal blog statement on thecentralvoice.ning.com

VOICE COLUMNISTS

I've been a reader for many years. It's always amazed me how much room *Central Voice* makes for local organizations and their columns. Thanks for providing a way for the community reach each other.

Central Voice: We have a simple rule about how to get your organization's story or events into our pages: Ask. Email - posops@aol.com

FORGET

It's funny -- as we get more and more rights and more and more mainstream attention, I think people begin to forget how horrible it was to grow up gay (and how horrible it can still be).

Noah, a reader

E-mail your thoughts to Central VOICE posops@aol.com

Left, Right, Center – PA Wants Full Liquor Privatization

Submitted by The Commonwealth Foundation and Keystone Politics

Commonwealth Foundation for PUBLIC POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Despite a million-dollar misinformation campaign run by the union leaders of the government liquor stores, Pennsylvanians continue to express wide support for allowing private stores to sell wine and liquor in Pennsylvania.

A new survey—the most comprehensive examination of Pennsylvanians' attitudes towards liquor privatization to date—shows that 66 percent of likely voters want to privatize Pennsylvania's government-run wine and spirits system. Strong, bipartisan support for the measure was revealed, even among union households.

The survey of more than 1,100 Pennsylvania residents and likely voters—co-sponsored by the Commonwealth Foundation, Pennsylvania's free-market think tank, and Keystone Politics, Pennsylvania's source for liberal political news and commentary—found 70 percent of Republicans and Independents, nearly 60 percent of liberals and 55 percent of union households favored abolishing the state-run liquor monopoly.

Moreover, more than half of Pennsylvanians said they are more likely to vote for state legislators who favor privatization.

Voters viewed the primary benefits of privatization as: lower prices, more jobs for Pennsylvanians, an end to border bleed, the elimination of the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board's (PLCB) conflict of interest in being both a purveyor and regulator of alcohol.

"It's clear that Pennsylvania voters agree that the PLCB should not be selling wine and spirits, but should be freed up to focus on its true role as a regulatory agency," said Jon Geeting of Keystone Politics.

Matthew J. Brouillette of the Commonwealth Foundation added, "Consumers recognize that both they and the State lose if the government determines what liquor products are sold, sets the prices, and drives shoppers to private stores in bordering states."

A strong majority of consumers (66 percent) support full privatization—removing government from the sale of liquor and licensing private retailers—strongly preferring that over measures that would only allow current retailers like beer distributors to sell wine and spirits.

Voters reject the arguments—promulgated by the government liquor store union—that privatizing liquor sales will result in net job loss, less state revenue and more dangerous neighborhoods.

Heart and Mind Strategies, a leading qualitative and quantitative market research and consulting firm, conducted the telephone survey from September 3-12, 2013 with more than 1,100 Pennsylvania residents and likely voters age 21+.

The Commonwealth Foundation, founded in 1988, crafts free-market policies, convinces Pennsylvanians of their benefits, and counters attacks on liberty. Politics Keystone Politics, founded in 2004, is Pennsylvania's source for liberal political news and commentary.

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Workers Lose Under Obamacare

by Elizabth B. Stelle, Commonwealth Foundation

Imagine one Monday your boss tells you the company is cutting your hours so they don't have to give you health insurance. This bad news is compounded when you start shopping for insurance and discover that premiums have skyrocketed in the last few years.

That's a tough blow for any worker, but it's becoming the new normal for individuals and families across Pennsylvania—even labor unions that supported the law are voicing their concerns.

Recently, the Nevada Chapter of the prominent union coalition AFL-CIO released a resolution stating, "The unintended consequences of the [Affordable Care Act] will lead to the destruction of the 40-hour work week, higher taxes, and force union members onto more costly plans—eventually destroying [union health plans] completely."

No wonder Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius visited Philadelphia to defend the Affordable Care Act (ACA) against growing public opposition. Secretary Sebelius continues to deny the law's adverse impact on workers, but stories of layoffs due to Obamacare are a dime a dozen.

Thanks to the ACA, public sector workers like school aides around the state are losing hours, pay and in some cases even their jobs. East Lancaster County School District and Dallas School District in Luzerne County are cutting back on support staff to avoid the ACA's "employer mandate" that penalizes employers for not offering health insurance to full-time employees—encouraging employers to use part-time workers and contractors, instead.

Ironically, the very organizations that ostensibly exist to protect these public sector workers—government unions—enthusiastically supported the job-killing law.

For example, in 2012 and 2013 the National Education Association gave $250,000 to Health Care for America Now!—a group lobbying for Obamacare. The Service Employees International Union also launched $12 million in television ads supporting the law. It seems these unions failed to take into account the law's many negative consequences.

Ironically, the very organizations that ostensibly exist to protect these public sector workers—government unions—enthusiastically supported the job-killing law.

The ACA was intended to expand access to health insurance, but in practice it reduces employment, increases insurance premiums, and hikes taxes through a complex labyrinth of rules and regulations. In effect, it's making it harder—not easier—for the average person to access health insurance.

Under the ACA, all employers, including governments, with more than 50 employees must provide full-time workers—those working 30 hours or more per week—with health insurance. Moreover, employer health insurance plans must meet new federal regulations and mandates regarding the cost to employees. Failure to meet these mandates results in a substantial fine.

That's a major burden on job creators around the country and here in Pennsylvania.

Because of the health care law's harsh financial penalties, restaurant chains including Applebee's and Papa John's, big box stores like Wal-Mart and even grocery stores like Wegmans are cutting hours or benefits. In fact, the people who struggle the most to find affordable health care—the working poor—are those hardest hit as their hours and paychecks shrink.

President Obama recently suspended this job-killing employer mandate—though his authority to do so is questionable—until after the next election. Unfortunately, that still leaves businesses trapped in an state of uncertainty, not knowing when the government will require them to provide insurance or face a penalty.

Not only are these workers being hurt with fewer hours and less pay, but they will pay more for insurance under the ACA. So, too, will small businesses and full-time workers.

Three years into the ACA, average family premiums have increased by $3,000. The CEO of Highmark predicts premiums will continue to rise ¾this after Highmark already increased Pennsylvania's individual and small group rates in 2010 and 2013. Meanwhile, Aetna raised premiums in Pennsylvania by 10 percent in 2011, noting the ACA as a significant cost driver.

Elected officials must now find ways to protect both public and private sector workers from such skyrocketing premiums and pay cuts. A good start would be giving those without employer-based insurance the same tax benefits businesses receive—leveling the playing field for all Pennsylvania workers.

Elizabeth Stelle is a policy analyst at the Commonwealth Foundation.

PA's Poor and Taxpayers Deserve Better

Matthew J. Brouillette
Commonwealth Foundation

We commend Gov. Corbett for refusing to take the politically expedient route of putting more people into Medicaid without first reforming it. Simply giving more people "coverage" is not the same as giving them "care." That's why we support the Governor's efforts to get greater flexibility from Washington, D.C. and more accountability in Harrisburg.

Unfortunately, we cannot also support the governor's "Healthy PA" initiative that would create a new taxpayer-subsidized program for hundreds of thousands of new participants in the unproven and flawed Affordable Care Act health insurance "exchange." This plan would neither serve our neediest citizens better in the short term nor will it reduce taxpayers' costs in the long run.

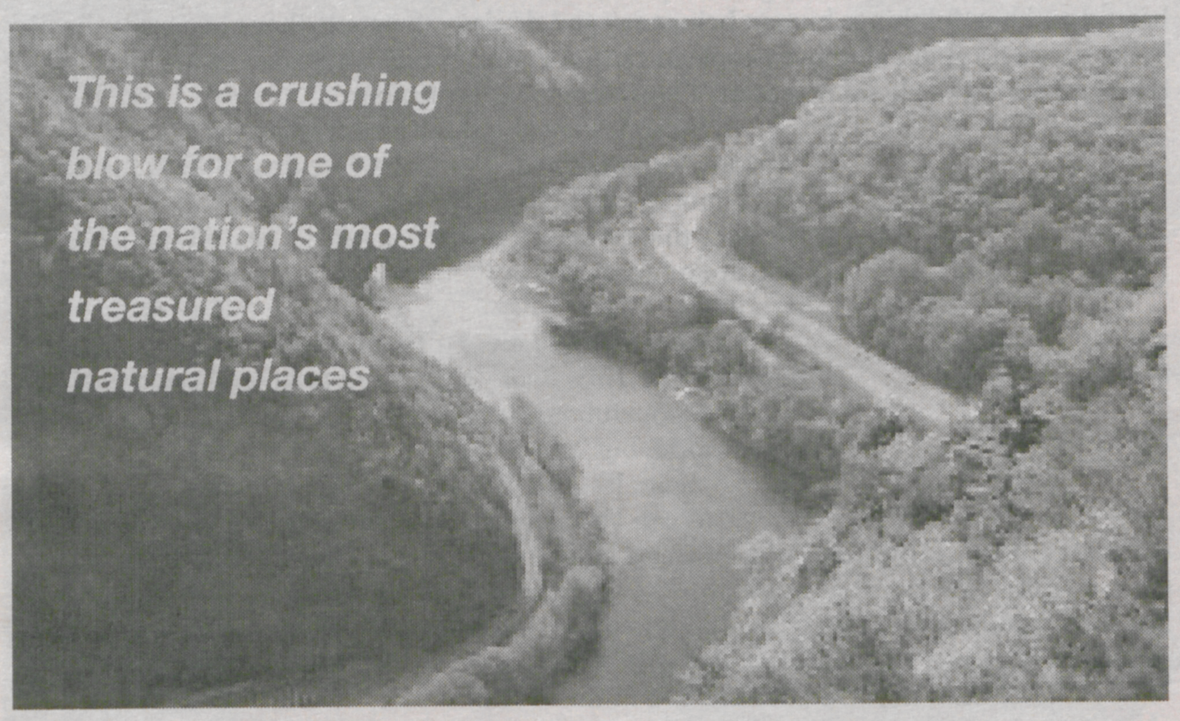
The Affordable Care Act may be the law of the land, but Pennsylvania can and should determine its own destiny in how it cares for the less fortunate. We encourage Gov. Corbett to continue to push back against harmful federal mandates like Medicaid expansion while we still have the power to do so.

We believe this plan will further limit the poor's access to health care, while increasing the burden on Pennsylvania taxpayers who also pay federal taxes. Already, nearly one in three PA doctors won't take Medicaid patients, and the cost of entrenching the Affordable Care Act—which has failed to reduce premiums and includes over 20 new taxes—is simply too great. Even labor unions like the Service Employees International Union, which supported the law with $12 million in TV ads, asked for exemptions to avoid the so-called Affordable Care Act's rising costs.

Whether new patients are being insured through traditional Medicaid plans or new taxpayer-subsidized health insurance exchanges, the taxpayers are still footing the bill for unsustainable government programs. Indeed, Medicaid already consumes nearly 30 cents of every dollar state government spends. As Gov. Corbett and Secretary Mackereth have noted, this spending is unsustainable and will continue to consume tax dollars that could otherwise pay for other core functions of government.

Pennsylvanians deserve Medicaid reform that provides robust choice to meet individual needs, gives flexibility to tailor benefits and reduce unnecessary costs, and creates incentives for Medicaid recipients who maintain healthy lifestyles and seek preventative care.

The Commonwealth Foundation crafts free-market policies, convinces Pennsylvanians of their benefits, and counters attacks on liberty.



Will Decision Destroy Delaware Water Gap?

Submitted by Sierra Club PA

In September the US District Court issued a decision allowing PPL Electric Utilities Corporation to begin construction of the Susquehanna to Roseland Transmission Line ("S-R Line") through three national park areas -- the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, the Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

The Pennsylvania Sierra Club is extremely disappointed that the court did not halt the PPL's construction of the high-voltage Susquehanna Roseland power line through these natural areas.

"This is a crushing blow for one of the nation's most treasured natural places", Transmission Committee Chair Don Miles said. "This construction will forever change the landscape of this spectacular vista that welcomes five million visitors annually, including those traveling along the Appalachian Trail. It is a loss for nature, for Pennsylvanians and for all who treasure this special place."

The Sierra Club and nine other environmental groups was seeking an injunction to halt PPL's construction of the 500kv, 200-ft towers, which was to begin the first week of September. The US District Court of D.C. not only ruled against the injunction but also against the basis for the appeal, clearing the way for PPL to begin construction.

The 145-mile, high-voltage power line will cut through the heart of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, the Delaware "Wild & Scenic" River, and the Appalachian Trail. Although the power line will use parts of existing rights of way, the construction will expand these corridors, impacting wildlife, tourism and recreation.

The environmental groups filed the appeal, arguing that the power line would cause significant harm to the natural integrity of the park and disfigure the region. The groups asserted that the "no-build" option was not properly considered by the National Parks Service.

Judge Upholds EPA Authority

Submitted by PennFuture

In a major victory for the health of local waterways, says environmental group PennFuture, a federal judge ruled that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has the authority to set limits on pollution entering the Chesapeake Bay.

The decision by U.S. District Court Judge Sylvia Rambo affirmed that the pollution limits established by EPA under the Clean Water Act, referred to as a Total Maximum Daily Load or TMDL, are within the agency's authority and based on sound science.

This is a major win for the continued improvement of waterways used by millions

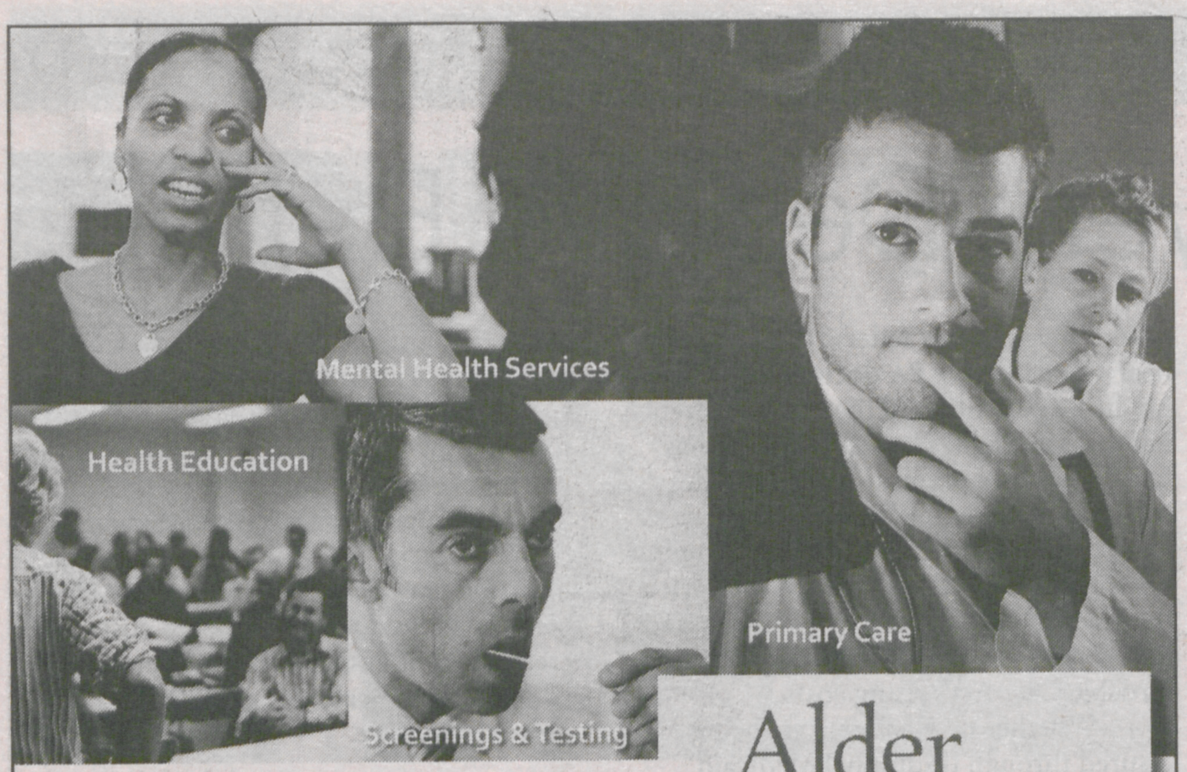
In 2011, large agricultural interests filed suit in an effort to overturn the Bay pollution limits, arguing the EPA lacked authority to develop the multi-state plan, and that the data and models used by the EPA were flawed. PennFuture was part of a coalition of public interest groups that joined the lawsuit to help defend the EPA's cleanup plan and the decades-long, collaborative process that led to its development.

"This is a major win for the continued improvement of waterways used by millions," said Jim Abernathy, interim president and chief executive officer of PennFuture. "It's also important for Pennsylvanians who recreate and live along the Susquehanna River and the many streams in our state, and for the health of our fish and wildlife. We are gratified that the court has upheld the EPA's authority on this science-based plan to clean up polluted rivers and streams in the Keystone State, and the Chesapeake Bay."

For over a decade, PennFuture has worked hand-in-hand on clean water issues with local watershed groups, fishing organizations, land conservancies and landowners by providing outreach, education and legal representation.

The Philadelphia Inquirer called PennFuture the "state's leading environmental advocacy organization;" the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette named the organization "one of the 10 most influential groups on the issue of natural gas drilling;" and StateImpact Pennsylvania, an online collaboration of NPR stations across the state, called PennFuture "the commonwealth's main environmental advocate."

> What the Pope thinks of being gay does not matter to the world. It matters to the people who like the Pope and follow the Pope... It is not a reflection of all religious people.
>
> **- Lady Gaga**



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Ally in the Academy

By Trum Simmons
Harrisburg Area Community College

Keeping the Faith

Last issue I quoted from a Howard Nemerov poem in which he observes that life is terrible and beautiful. This thought causes him to cry, as well it should.

And I began to wrestle with the age-old question of how are we to live in this paradoxical and ambiguous world? Consider the glass is half full or half empty metaphor: Depending on which part you focus on, your day can be bright or dark. But in reality the glass is always both, and where does that leave us?

Perhaps I could just quote Kurt Vonnegut in Slaughterhouse V and say that during a life span we need to concentrate on the good times and ignore the bad. That is not a bad philosophy, and helpful if you can pull it off.

But what about the relentless, daily barrage of the pain and suffering in our world? What about innocent children gassed by chemical weapons in Syria? What about the hateful and hurtful things human beings say and do daily to people they supposedly love? What do we do about all those people in central Pennsylvania who have little or nothing to celebrate during the holiday season of November and December?

...how does one live in this world, anyway?

Indeed, what about the bird-headed dwarfs, children who are born malformed so that a 6-year-old boy is the size of an 11-month-old infant? What about the millions of deaths in the wars that ravaged the 20th century? The millions of people who are refugees, the millions of children who live on the streets?

Annie Dillard gives these examples in her marvelous book *For The Time Being*, and I need to say right now that her book is a hopeful one. It rejoices in the beauty and complexity of the world, but "for credibility's sake," only after confronting the bad news. It's a good read and I recommend it.

When I was in my 20s I came alive to the social and cultural problems America was facing, and I developed a strong urge to change the world. Chicago sang, "We can change the world, we can save the children," and lifted my spirits. But then there was also Henry David Thoreau who said this in Walden: "I came into the world not to change the world but to live in it, be it good or bad."

In either case, how does one live in this world, anyway? Thoreau found many obstacles in his path and wrote about how to overcome them. It took him a couple of years living in the woods to figure this out, and his book ends on the same positive note as Annie Dillard's. The world is full of light, as long as we are awake to embrace it. (Thoreau says he never met a man who was fully awake, and if he did, how could he look him in the face?)

So much of the answer to our dilemma is that we need to accept the world as it is, not as we wish it should be. We must try to change it, but when things don't work out, don't be surprised. St. Paul said he had experienced good times and bad, and had learned to be content in whatever state he found himself.

Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita had to learn the same lesson. A warrior who is frightened by the prospect of going to war, he is in despair. Does he really need to fight and kill so many people? Yes, that's who he is, and that's the way the world is, says his companion Krishna. "It is better to do your own duty badly than to perfectly do another's," Krishna says. "All actions are enveloped by flaws as fire is enveloped by smoke."

Thank God for Walt Whitman, to whom I come so often when I'm dealing with the hopeless part of life. He knew all about pain and suffering: "I am the man, I suffered, I was there." But he could be amazed and uplifted by the mica on the side of a rock as well as by the touch of another human being. In his great poem Song of Myself he talks about how he loves life and believes in the innate wonderfulness of everyone, warts and all. Whitman believed that love is what holds the world together and asked us to come with him on his journey of illumination and affirmation.

I walk along with Uncle Walter and am reinvigorated.

> I support gay marriage. I believe they have a right to be as miserable as the rest of us.
>
> **- Kinky Friedman**

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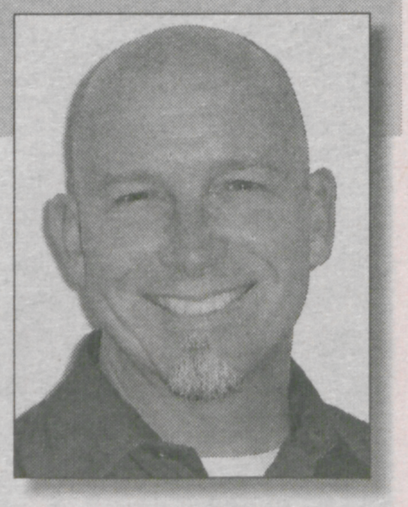

Simple, Not Easy?

Changing our thinking changes our life. Not might. Not could. It does. Why? Because everything we experience begins with a thought. You are reading this article because you made a consciousness, non-verbal decision to click on a link or pick up a copy of this newspaper. Or, perhaps you made a choice recently or sometime in the past to follow me on Facebook or Twitter. Either way, you're not here by accident or some divine predestined plan. You're not working out some karma from a past life in which you refused to read.

You made a decision. Every day, every minute, we are consciously and subconsciously weighing our options and making decisions. Deciding to change our thinking about anything is the first step to acceptance or at the very least tolerance. It seems very simple. And you know what? It is! Then why don't more people do it? Why don't the entire seven billion plus people on our planet simply make the choice to follow their dreams, dance like nobody's watching and be their authentic selves?

Judgment. We judge each other. We judge ourselves. We fret and sweat about how other people have, do or might judge us. The universal principle of cause and effect is not complicated, but all the anxiety we put ourselves through would certainly make people think so. *We*, not God, a devil or someone/something else, make it hard. We take something that is simple and create a situation that is not easy.

We judge each other. We judge ourselves. We fret and sweat about how other people have, do or might judge us.

I recently watched Brandon Blinn's award-winning film, "Thirteen or so Minutes…" It's about two men who find themselves attracted to each other. I mean *really* attracted to each other. Nothing remarkable about that today and certainly not in my world, but there's a slight twist. They've both been heterosexual their entire lives. It's a short, poignant look at how we pigeon-hole ourselves into strict labeling of every part of our lives, including our ability to form intimate relationships.

I strongly believe many straight men in our society are sometimes so horrified that they might be perceived as being gay that they often stop themselves of expressing even the slightest bit of emotion or caring for other men. That's a pretty blanket statement, I realize, and I know plenty of straight men who are confident enough in their masculinity and sexual orientation to know that hugging, holding or kissing another man doesn't make you gay. At one time I had absolutely NO straight male friends. Now I count many with whom I share my life and you might well be one of them. But as a rule in our country I stand by my statement. Study after study of gay bashing perpetrators has come to prove that many, if not the majority of them, are repressing their own sexuality. There is obviously a problem and it goes unaddressed daily.

I'm using the film and this issue to show just how easily we deny ourselves the very things we desire because it doesn't fit our pictures. We want to go on a trip, but refuse to let a friend pay our way because we would feel pathetic. We ask for the perfect job, but turn it down because we'd have to move. We want to lose weight and even belong to a gym, but do nothing about it because it's too far to drive, too hot and humid today, or too much trouble since we're fat anyway…and where DID all those double-stuff Oreos go to?

Over the summer I returned home from the grocery store and spent five minutes communing with the most beautiful black butterfly with blue spots. I didn't even know we had those in our part of the country. S/He apparently needed a rest on the fountain outside our front door and was quite content to have me watch the action of folding and unfold its wings. Beautiful. That was also a day for which I had a two-page "To Do" list before leaving a day later for a week-long trip. If I'd thought about my chores and errands I would have never experienced the joy of just marveling at beauty. An added benefit was that afterwards I was so much more relaxed.

Go offline. Read your email just once or twice a day instead of every time your smart phone rings or beeps. Start enjoying life now, because "now" is all we really have. Today open up to experience life without expectation and without judgment. It really is that simple. Stop making it so hard.

In Spirit, Truth and Playfulness,
Terry

Dr. Terry Drew Karanen is the Founder and Spiritual Leader of Center for Spiritual Living Cumberland Valley and a licensed social worker in private practice. For more information, see: http://newthoughtpa.org

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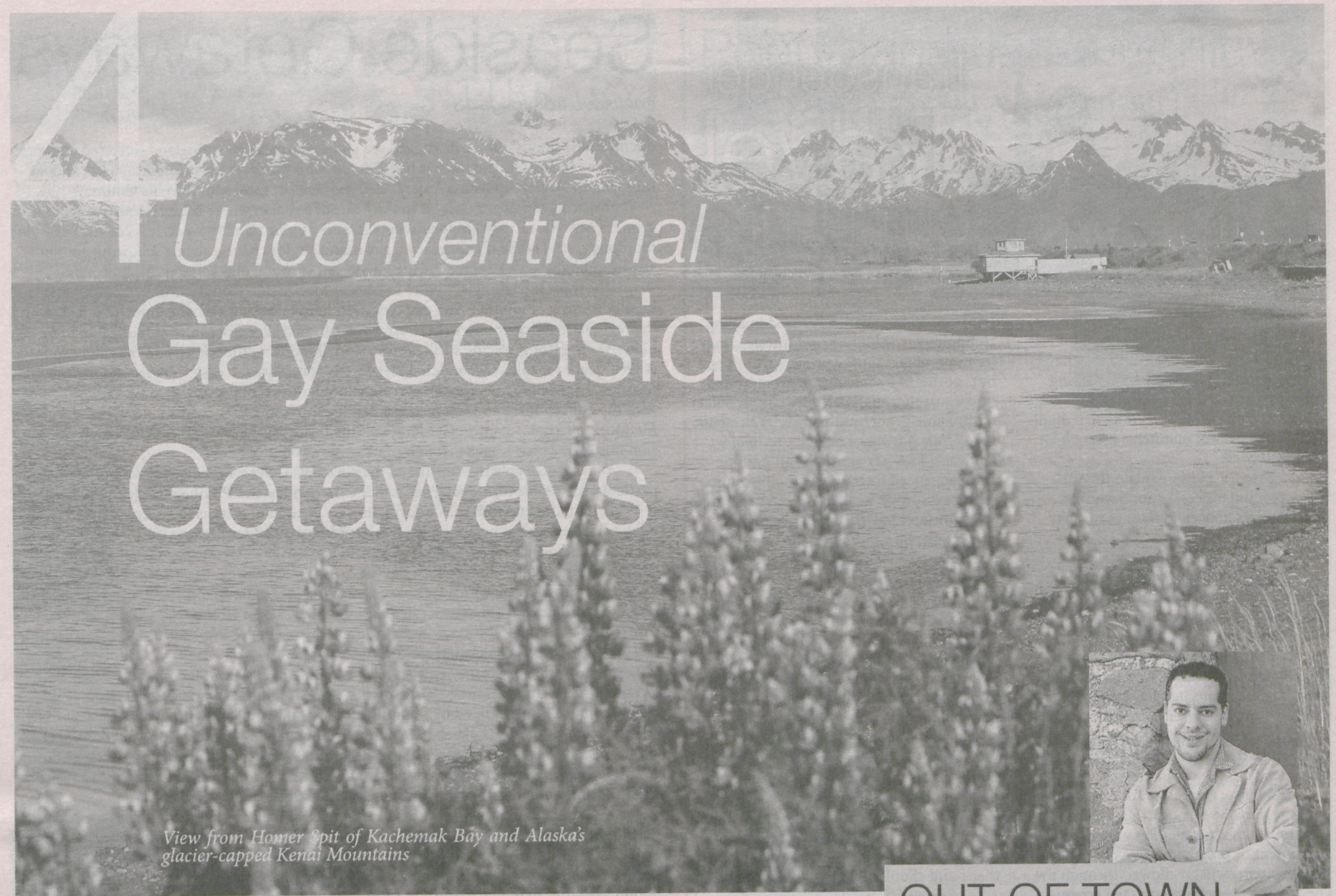
4 Unconventional Gay Seaside Getaways



View from Homer Spit of Kachemak Bay and Alaska's glacier-capped Kenai Mountains

OUT OF TOWN
by Andrew Collins

Beach vacations come in many forms, especially in the context of gay and lesbian travel. Years ago, GLBT travelers seeking summer fun at the shore tended to focus on several tried-and-true resort communities, primarily Provincetown, Ogunquit, Rehoboth, Fire Island, Laguna Beach, Key West, and Saugatuck. Although all of these towns are as are still justly popular, with their lively gay beach bars and inviting accommodations, America has no shortage of quirky, scenic seaside communities with progressive bents and welcoming vibes.

Here are four great little coastal towns - two on the West Coast and two on the East Coast - you may not have thought much about, especially if you live outside the regions they're in. Each has plenty going for it, from an abundance of romantic, gay-friendly inns to urbane restaurants to memorable cultural and recreational assets.

Camden and Rockland, Maine

To experience a less-developed, ruggedly scenic part of New England, make the two-hour drive north of Portland, Maine to visit the historic seaside communities along western Penobscot Bay, including Rockland and Camden (mainesmidcoast.com). Maine's Mid-Coast is a place for quiet vacations, ideal if you're a hiker, photographer, fishing enthusiast, or sailor. Camden is home to a fleet of Windjammer sailing ships, which can be booked not only on multiple-day excursions throughout the region but also for afternoon jaunts along Penobscot Bay.

The craggy 1,000-foot peaks of Camden Hills State Park delight outdoors enthusiasts - you can scamper along more than 20 miles of rugged nature and hiking trails through this unspoiled paradise - there's also overnight camping. The formerly workaday town of Rockland has come into its own in recent years, with several outstanding restaurants and cafes - don't miss In Good Company (ingoodcompanymaine.com), a dapper neighborhood wine bar with creative American cuisine, or Primo (primorestaurant.com), where James Beard award-winning chef Melissa Kelly turns out stunning farm-to-table Mediterranean-inspired fare. The key draw in Rockland is one of the country's best small art museums, the Farnsworth, which focuses on noted regional artists of international acclaim, including Louise Nevelson, George Bellows, and the Wyeth, who are celebrated with their own wing.

Among recommended accommodations, Camden is home to the GLBT-owned Camden Harbour Inn (camdenharbourinn.com), which is situated across from a harbor and has 18 warmly appointed rooms and suites, plus a terrific restaurant. In Rockland, the gay-owned LimeRock Inn (limerockinn.com) is a handsome painted-lady Victorian B&Bs whose rooms are outfitted with all the perks you'd expect of a modern hotel. A lavish breakfast is included in the rates, and downtown restaurants are within easy walking distance.

Homer, Alaska

You may not think of Alaska when you're planning a beach vacation, but the offbeat fishing town of Homer (homeralaska.com) is an endearingly funky and gay-friendly coastal getaway popular both with residents and visitors to the Last Frontier. On the Kenai Peninsula and reached from Anchorage either by a stunning 220-mile drive or an easy 40-minute flight, the town is situated at the mouth of Kachemak Bay and affords dramatic views of the glacier-capped Kenai Mountains.

You can stroll among the cool coffeehouses and seafood restaurants along Homer Spit, which pokes out into the bay - good bets include Captain Patties Fish House, which serves delicious crab cakes and a nice selection of Alaska microbrew beers, and Coal Town Coffee & Tea. A must-see here is the fascinating Alaska Islands & Oceans Visitor Center, but also note Homer's many outdoorsy activities, from sea kayaking to road-biking to wildlife- and whale-watching tours.

For a splurge, consider taking a water-taxi across Kachamak Bay to spend a couple of nights at the secluded and rustic-elegant Tutka Bay Lodge, which overlooks a crystalline fjord and has its own cooking school run by talented chef-owner Kirsten Dixon. Back in Homer, charming, gay-friendly accommodations include Brigitte's Bavarian B&B (akms.com/brigitte), on a bluff outside town, and the Bay Avenue B&B (bayavebb.com), a modern house with plenty of big windows and great views over the bay.

In Homer's funky village center, notable dining options abound - be sure to check out colorfully decorated Mermaid Bistro (mermaidbistro.com), which serves out-of-this-world salads, sandwiches, and pizzas with an emphasis on organic ingredients; colorful Café Cups (cafecupsofhomer.com), where you can feast on platters of tiger prawns with honey-habanero sauce, and charbroiled filet mignon; and adorable Two Sisters Bakery, which is known for seafood chowder, creative salads, and delectable baked goods. There's not a ton of nightlife in these parts, but offbeat Alice's Champagne Palace (aliceschampagnepalace.com) is a fun spot for live music, cold beer, and juicy burgers.

Mendocino, California

Among the many jewels of the rugged California coastline, the beautiful little town of Mendocino (visitmen-

Transgender Travel GUIDELINES

The Transportation Safety Administration recognizes the concerns members of the transgender community may have with undergoing the security screening process at our nation's airports and is committed to conducting screening in a dignified and respectful manner, a recent TSA memo advised.

These travel tips explain the various screening processes and technologies travelers may encounter at security checkpoints.

Preparing for Travel

Making Reservations: Secure Flight requires airlines to collect a traveler's full name, date of birth, gender and Redress Number (if applicable) to significantly decrease the likelihood of watch list misidentification. Travelers are encouraged to use the same name, gender, and birth date when making the reservation that match the name, gender, and birth date indicated on the government-issued ID that the traveler intends to use during travel.

Packing a Carry-on: All carry-on baggage must go through the screening process. If a traveler has any medical equipment or prosthetics in a carry-on bag, the items will be allowed through the checkpoint after completing the screening process. Travelers may ask that bags be screened in private if a bag must be opened by an officer to resolve an alarm. Travelers should be aware that prosthetics worn under the clothing that alarm a walk through metal detector or appear as an anomaly during Advanced Imaging Technology (AIT) screening may result in additional screening, to include a thorough pat-down. Travelers may request a private screening at any time during the security screening process.

Contacting TSA in Advance of Travel: Travelers may contact TSA prior to a flight through the TSA Contact Center at 1-866-289-9673 and TSA-ContactCenter@dhs.gov.

The Screening Process

Private Screening: Screening can be conducted in a private screening area with a witness or companion of the traveler's choosing. A traveler may request private screening or to speak with a supervisor at any time during the screening process.

Travel Document Checker: The traveler will show their government-issued identification and boarding pass to an officer to ensure the identification and boarding pass are authentic and match. Transgender travelers are encouraged to book their reservations such that they match the gender and name data indicated on the government-issued ID.

Walk through Metal Detector: Metal detectors are in use at all airports.

Advanced Imaging Technology (AIT): Screening with advanced imaging technology is voluntary and travelers may "opt out" at any time. Travelers who "opt out" of the AIT screening are required to undergo a thorough pat-down by an officer of the same gender as the traveler presents.

New Advanced Imaging Technology Software: TSA has upgraded all millimeter wave advanced imaging technology units with new software called Automated Target Recognition to further enhance privacy protections by eliminating the image of an actual traveler and replacing it with a generic outline of a person.

Pat-Down: A pat-down may be performed if there is an alarm of the metal detector, if an anomaly is detected using advanced imaging technology, if an officer determines that the traveler is wearing non-form fitting clothing, or on a random basis. If a pat-down is chosen or otherwise necessary, private screening may be requested. Pat-downs are conducted by an officer of the same gender as presented by the individual at the checkpoint.

Prosthetics: Travelers should neither be asked to nor agree to lift, remove, or raise any article of clothing to reveal a prosthetic and should not be asked to remove it.

Behavior Detection Program: Behavior Detection Officers screen travelers using non-intrusive behavior observation and analysis techniques to identify potentially high-risk passengers. Officers are designed to detect individuals exhibiting behaviors that indicate they may be a threat to aviation and/or transportation security. Individuals exhibiting specific observable behaviors may be referred for additional screening, which can include a pat-down and physical inspection of carry-on baggage.

TSA recognizes that exhibiting some of these behaviors does not automatically mean a person has terrorist or criminal intent. Referrals for additional screening are solely based on specific observed behaviors.

Reporting Travel Issues or Concerns

Travelers who believe they have experienced unprofessional conduct at a security checkpoint are encouraged to request a supervisor at the checkpoint to discuss the matter immediately or to submit a concern to TSA's Contact Center at: TSA-ContactCenter@dhs.gov.

Travelers who believe they have experienced discriminatory conduct because of a protected basis may file a concern with TSA's Office of Civil Rights & Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement at: Civil Rights for Travelers.

Travelers may also file discrimination concerns with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties at: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

Seaside Getaways

continued from page 13

docino.com) stands out for its rugged sea cliffs, charming New England–inspired cottages, and serene seclusion. The town is just 150 miles up the coast from San Francisco, and 80 miles via the lovely Anderson Valley from the heart of the Sonoma Wine Country.

This cliff-top community is in the heart of a region where loggers, tourists, winegrowers, writers, farmers, hippies, yuppies, and fishermen all more or less coexist harmoniously. And while it's not really a gay mecca, it does have a strong following among same-sex couples who appreciate the low-keyed vibe and alluring setting.

The most intriguing activities in coastal Mendocino County usually involve one kind of touring or another. You can rent mountain bikes, kayaks, or canoes and explore the region's rivers or country lanes. And you can hike along oceanfront bluffs that loom high over the frothy Pacific surf and watch whales during the spring and fall migrations. A great place for this is Mendocino Headlands State Park, an easy walk from downtown. Just north of Mendocino, the once-prosaic lumber town of Fort Bragg has lately gentrified with hip coffeehouses and fun restaurants - it's also home to such attractions as the 47-acre Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, and the historic 21-mile Skunk Train scenic excursion railroad, which passes through soaring redwood groves.

You can also go wine-touring in the adjacent Anderson Valley, whose cool climate is particularly suitable for turning out stellar Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Mendocino County Wine (mendowine.com) has information on tastings at dozens of vineyards open to the public. The region has no shortage of stellar restaurants. Occupying a dark, wood-paneled room with big windows overlooking colorful gardens, 955 Ukiah (955restaurant.com) serves sophisticated California-style cuisine. Also outstanding, the unassuming Moosse Café (themoosse.com), which is warmed by a fireplace, offers exceptional mod-American fare and laid-back yet efficient service, and the MacCallum House (maccallumhouse.com) - also a nice place to stay - serves some of the most accomplished regional American cuisine on the Northern California coast.

Mendocino and nearby villages have a bounty of gay-friendly inns and B&Bs, with an emphasis on unpretentious, rustic luxury. The J.D. House (jdhouse.com) is a lovely eight-room B&B surrounded by fragrant gardens, and with an invitingly simple and fresh country-chic aesthetic. Innkeepers Andrew Hindman and Damien Wood also run two sister inns, the Packard House and Blue Door Inn. A stylish "eco-resort" with one of the country's most acclaimed vegan restaurants (Ravens'), the Stanford Inn by the Sea (stanfordinn.com) has a breathtaking location overlooking Mendocino Bay.

A short drive south of town near verdant Van Damme State Park, the gay-owned Glendeven Inn (glendeven.com) looks like a Maine farmhouse and is surrounded by lush gardens and dewy meadows. Most of the rooms here have private decks overlooking the ocean and are warmed by fireplaces, and the on-site wine bar is a wonderful dining option. Another highlight is the gay-owned boutique resort Stevenswood (stevenswood.com), which is nestled among tall trees and open meadows and has 10 rooms decorated in a light and airy contemporary style. A big draw here is the serene full-service spa. Also nearby is the the 65-room Little River Inn (littleriverinn.com), a rambling and comfy hideaway with a friendly staff and charming rooms - it's perfect for a romantic getaway - room all face the ocean, and some with fireplaces and Jacuzzi tubs.

Tybee Island, Georgia

Every bit as quirky, laid-back, and personable as historic Savannah, which lies just a 20-minute drive inland, Tybee Island (visittybee.com) is one of Georgia's famed barrier islands, an idyllic locale for beach-bumming, fishing, or boating. In May 2013, this colorful beachside community hosted its first Tybee Gay Days (gaysavannah.com/tybee-gay-days), a weekend of parties and events that organizers plan an annual gathering.

You'll find plenty of condo and cottage rentals on this compact island, making it a popular destination for extended stays with groups of friends. One very good options is the LGBT-friendly Beachside Colony Resort (beachsidecolony.com), which has upscale one-, two-, and three-bedroom condos set among eight different buildings and adjoins the terrific, lesbian-owned restaurant and bar, Marlin Monroe's Surfside Grill (marlinmonroessurfsidegrill.com). Here you can feast on tasty seafood and minty mojitos while relaxing on the deck overlooking the sea. Also check out the sister restaurant, Fannies on the Beach (fanniesonthebeach.com), which is steps from the island's colorful pier and pavilion. And off U.S. 80 as you enter the island, lively Coco's Sunset Grille (cocostybee.com) has occasional gay parties and is another sure bet for delicious seafood.

The fact that Tybee is so close to Savannah (visitsavannah.com) makes it a great option if you're keen on a vacation that mixes beach relaxation with touring historic homes, tony galleries, and upscale Southern restaurants - and, of course, you can always overnight in Savannah and visit Tybee as a day-trip. Charming properties like the snazzy yet historic Mansion on Forsyth Park (mansiononforsythpark.com); the stylish and art-filled Bohemian Hotel Savannah Riverfront (bohemianhotelsavannah.com), and the sleek Andaz Savannah (savannah.andaz.hyatt.com) are all favorites with gay travelers, and Club One (clubone-online.com) is a hot spot for dancing and drag shows, it being the home nightclub of Lady Chablis, of _Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil _ fame.

Andrew Collins is the editor in chief of the GLBT travel magazines OutAloha and OutCity, and he covers gay travel for the website GayTravel.About.com.

book review

By Deborah Battisti & Lori Lane
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The library will have a new online catalog in November. "Encore" will make it easier to find the titles you want, create lists of titles and keep a history of your reading. Find out more about the coming changes at dcls.org and on our Facebook page.

Here are some new (and not-so-new) titles at The Library:

Glitterland by Alexis Hall

Trapped within the cycles of manic depression, ex-literary darling Ash Winters has given up on love, happiness, and himself. Until he meets aspiring model Darian Taylor, whose glittering joy helps Ash to find the light. (Publishers Weekly 6/17/13)

Black Blade Blues by J. A. Pitts

Sarah Beauhall has more on her plate than most twenty-somethings: day job as a blacksmith, night job as a props manager for low-budget movies, and her free time is spent fighting in a medieval reenactment group.

Detours by Jeffrey Ricker

Joel Patterson should be happier than ever. He's just returned from a two-week vacation in London, where he met Philip, who might be the man of his dreams. Instead, Joel's heading to Maine for his mother's funeral. He quits his job to fulfill one last request for his mother: unload his parents' albatross of an RV by delivering it to an old family friend in California. Somehow, Joel's high school "friend" Lincoln has invited himself along on the ride and into Joel's bed. The other person who's invited herself along? The ghost of his mother, who still has plenty to say about her son's judgment (or lack thereof).

Herself When She's Missing by Sarah Terez Rosenblum

The relationship between Jordan and the much younger Andrea begins in the ticket line for the band "Cry Wolf". Andrea loses herself in Jordan until the relationship becomes volatile and Andrea is torn between escaping and maintaining her addiction to Jordan explores the irrationality of sex with uncommon wit and fearlessness. One reviewer said, "I can never resist the story of a bad romance and this one grabbed me by the collar and dragged me through a love-sick mind's tilted, temporally disordered terrain. Don't forget to drink a glass of water and eat a protein bar before reading. This book might leave you faint." --Sara Levine, author of "Treasure Island!!! "

Poet Maria James-Thiaw on Talking "White"

By Frank Pizzoli

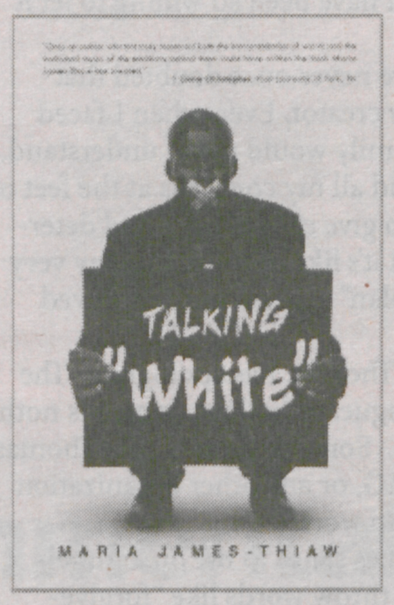
Over lunch local poet Maria James-Thiaw had the easy manner of a day off from routines. When she speaks, her mellow voice reveals why others have said she "blesses the mic" when reading her work at local spots.

James-Thiaw is author of three poetry collections: *Windows to the Soul* (Shippensburg University Press, 1999), *Rising Waters* (Shippensburg University Press, 2003) and her latest, *Talking "White"* (postDada Press, 2013).

Talking "White" addresses a taboo topic in some circles and reveals the truth behind intra-cultural bullying between African Americans.

With poems like "Ostracized," "Keeping it Real," and "The Post-Black Manifesto," James-Thiaw skillfully brings cultural identity politics to light. At the same time, she uses her poetry to honor literary figures from the Harlem Renaissance era as well as members of her own family.

"Although I write about a variety of subjects the underlying theme in this book stems from the things that we do within the culture to divide ourselves. For example, if someone speaks the language well, they may be judged as 'not black enough.' That's where the title Talking 'White' comes from," she explains.



In 2006, she produced an independent CD of spoken word and music entitled *FREEverse*. Her poetry has been published in a variety of journals including *Black Magnolias, Fledgling Rag*, and *Love Your Rebellion*.

As a performance poet, Maria gracefully bridges the gap between stage and page by delivering her well-crafted lyric poetry with the dramatic power of a seasoned spoken word artist. Since the mid-1990s, she's been 'blessing the mic' at venues throughout the East Coast and in Auvillar, a village in the South of France that served as inspiration for many poems in Talking "White." James-Thiaw is a professor of literary and cultural studies Central Penn College.

Books available at mariathepoet.wordpress.com

Local Poet Jack Veasey Reads Nov. 22

Local poet Jack Veasey has recently released "Shapely: Selected Formal Poems", his eleventh published collection of poems. He is a Philadelphia native who has been living in Hummelstown for more than 20 years.

Veasey reads from his work Nov. 22, 7-9 p.m. at the LGBT Community Center, 1306 N. Third Street, Harrisburg.

An accomplished poet, Veasey is 2010 nominee for a Pushcart Prize. He is the author of ten previous published collections of poetry, most recently "The Sonnets" and "5-7-5" (both from Small Hours Press, 2007). His poems have appeared in numerous periodicals including the popular but now defunct Christopher Street.

His poems have also been included in anthologies and his plays have been produced by Theater Center Philadelphia and Lancaster's Theater Of The Seventh Sister. Veasey is a Fellow ship recipient rom the PA Council on the Arts and a two-time honoree of The PA Center.

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thinking out loud

By Abby Dees

For people who have endured the ex-gay message of Exodus, apologies might be much too little, too late.

Do We Have to Forgive the Ex-Gays?

When Alan Chambers, the president of Exodus "ex-gay" Ministries publically apologized for the hurt he has caused LGBT people, I forgave him. There are few things more powerful to change attitudes about LGBT lives than religious leaders publically sharing their personal journeys toward understanding. No need to flagellate him for past wrongdoings; he's here now. Let's look forward.

My fellow LGBT commentators haven't been so eager to hand out forgiveness to anyone who asks for it. Look no further than the comments sections of LGBT media reports on the apology to see a litany of the psychological and spiritual torture that Chambers and his ilk have perpetuated, however well-intended his apology. Their issue with Exodus wasn't that they simply disagreed with the message, but that the message caused real harm, even death. In light of this, how could I have been so willing to let it all go and move on?

The problem, if you want to call it that, is that I have never once doubted that my sexual orientation was perfectly fine in the eyes of my creator. Even when I faced discrimination at work and school, or worried that my family would never understand, or if being gay would doom me to a life of loneliness, I laid all my concerns at the feet of other people, not God. My spirituality only ever served to give me strength and determination in a world of human frailty. I have no idea what it's like to think that my very being, as Joel Osteen frequently puts it, isn't "God's best plan" – a new and improved way of saying God still thinks LGBT lives kinda suck.

Now yet another Exodus leader, former VP Randy Thomas, has apologized. The responses are just as damning as before: His apology is vague, or hollow, or means nothing until he actually does something to undo the damage. Some suggested that Thomas donate all the money he ever made from Exodus to PFLAG, or any other organization doing the clean-up work.

I have to believe that there is power in my forgiveness

This all makes sense to me on an intellectual level. We throw words like "forgiveness" around the same way that we call anyone who manages to survive a calamity a "hero." The power of those words is too easily diluted by sloppy, facile use. Here we have men who, correctly, acknowledged their mistakes. Good. This is important. But just how admirable is it to decide to do the right thing after you've been doing the wrong thing time after time? I truly don't know.

Both of these men have made declarations to keep providing support and ministry to people who choose to keep trying to be straight – or something along those lines. I'm not sure if that's the accepted terminology. Could it be "struggling with homosexual inclinations"? Something like that. Again, I have no idea why you'd want to do anything other than make peace with your gayness, unless you still feel there's something inherently wrong with it.

This shows me they have not yet understood their own complicity in others' pain, let alone sacrificed enough to atone – and how could they ever do enough to fully make up for the slow, pernicious, soul-etching effect of the "not God's best" happy talk? These apologies, at best, are statements of intention to begin the process of helping piece together shattered lives and spirits. No more than that.

And also, no less. I still want to forgive them. I have the right to, as much as anyone else has the right not to. I was struck by one comment, alone among the many justifiably angry ones, from someone named Czahn: "God made me gay, he also made me have the capacity to forgive [...] Today I am free to be me. Because I chose to forgive, and move forward...fiercely." [sic]

Like Czahn, I have to believe that there is power in my forgiveness. I won't disparage those who can't let these ex-gays off the hook, but there must be some small measure of healing to be found in accepting an offer of reconciliation. My forgiveness means that I expect a lot from these men, and that the hard work begins now.

Abby is a civil rights attorney-turned-author who has been in the LGBT rights trenches for 25+ years.

Near Summer's End by Steve Wetzel

Susquehanna River Exhibit at Art Association of Hbg

Four plein air artists will display their stunning views of the Susquehanna River at The Art Association of Harrisburg through Nov. 21. The four artists whose works will be showcased are Paul Gallo, David R. Henry, Steven Heffner and Stephen Wetzel. AAH Board Member David Volkman is the exhibition's sponsor.

Paul Gallo of Middletown studied at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and Harrisburg Area Community College, and holds an MFA from Syracuse University. With plein air painting in oils as his primary focus, Gallo is also a teacher of illustration and design at the Art Institute of York, and an instructor of Landscape Painting at the Art Association of Harrisburg. He exhibits with The Seven Lively Artists, and his work has been included in shows at the Cape Cod Museum and The State Museum of Pennsylvania.

Steven Heffner of York studied at the former York Academy of Art with William Falkler. Besides his painting, Heffner works as a sculptor in steel. Not only is Heffner an artist and a business owner, he also has been a model-maker, furniture designer, a machinist, a carpenter, an illustrator and graphic designer. Heffner's Susquehanna views "go back to his youth on the River and the surrounding farms and landings." He says that the seasons and personalities of the Susquehanna run through his family much the same way it runs through Pennsylvania, shaping his artistic interpretations in similar fashion to the way it shapes the land. Heffner goes on to say that his "comfort zone is in a light aircraft exploring the mountains above Williamsport down to the lower Susquehanna and the bay." The River is truly in Heffner's blood, materializing its essence in his art.

David R. Henry maintains that outdoor landscape painting is his passion, and that direct painting from nature is a challenge and a joy. He states, "Outdoor artists are faced with weather extremes, bloodthirsty stinging bugs, curious cows and human onlookers, as well as the situation when the boat selected by the artist as his motif unexpectedly sails in the midst of the painting process. For me such challenges simply add to the richness of the outdoor painting experience." Henry has studied in classes at AAH, Mechanicsburg Art Centre, HACC and California University of PA. At AAH, he studied for 11 years with John David Wissler, as well as with numerous other instructors. David Henry is a member of The Seven Lively Artists, and exhibits with the group frequently.

Marietta Trees by David R. Henry

Stephen Wetzel, a native of York County, currently lives near Harrisburg but remains close to the Susquehanna River, a continuing source of inspiration for many of his paintings. Travelling and painting on location, "in the spirit of the Impressionists," gives Wetzel the focus on capturing the feeling of time and place, as well as the spirit of the day. Another member of The Seven Lively Artists, Wetzel exhibits with that group, but also has shown his work at the Art of the State at the State Museum of Pennsylvania, and at the Philadelphia Sketch Club. The Landscape Painting instructor for AAH, Wetzel also has worked as a freelance editorial cartoonist and was a member of the American Association of Editorial Cartoonists.

The exhibition will remain on view at the AAH galleries at 21 N. Front St., Harrisburg, through November 21 with gallery hours of 9:30 AM to 9 PM Monday through Thursday, 9:30 AM to 4 PM Friday, 10 AM to 4 PM Saturday, and 2 to 5 PM Sunday. Call 717-236-1432 for more information or visit www.artassocofhbg.com.

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Men's Chorus Welcomes New Conductor

Jordan Markham, Harrisburg Men's Chorus Director

Jordan Markham, 24, is the new conductor of the Harrisburg Men's Chorus.

The chorus' next concert is Sun., Dec. 8, 4 p.m., The Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus "A Winter Whirl" at the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg, 1280 Clover Lane. Tickets $15. http://harrisburgmenschorus.org

The concert marks Jordan Markham's premier as artistic director. In choosing musical pieces for the chorus, "I was inspired by the notion of traveling through the world and experiencing the unique cultural flairs of the season," he said. The audience can expect, he said, "pit stops throughout Europe and the Americas enjoying music from the cathedrals of medieval Europe to the plains of the Southwest, and everywhere in between."

"One thing I've heard from many people both in and outside of the chorus is how I'm very different from previous directors," Makrham said. "My goal is to combine genres and cross the line between campy and classical." For example, in the Spring concert, the chorus performed selections composed by Randall Thompson and Aaron Copland. "To offset this, we performed a 15th century madrigal in drag and a male version of Leader of The Pack. I am trying to create a fun atmosphere where we can all go to escape daily life," Markham said.

Born in Hershey and having lived in Middletown his my whole life, Markham is familiar with the region.

He studied Vocal Performance (Classical/Opera) at The Peabody Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University. "I am currently Organist and Choirmaster at Gloria Dei! Lutheran Church in Arnold, Maryland," He said. "As well as my career in voice, I play piano and organ, frequently perform in the region and Maryland," he said.

While living in Baltimore, Markham was a professional chorister at The National Cathedral in Washington D.C. "I was also a professional chorister and soloist for The Handel Choir of Baltimore and for a time was employed by them.

"I grew up in the area performing at the Capitol Performing Arts Centre, now black. He has also played for and served as musical director for shows in the region and Baltimore. In high school, Markham traveled the country singing in numerous choirs - ACDA National Honor Choir, ACDA All Eastern Honor Choir, and PMEA District, Regional Choirs.

After being selected as the Artistic Director for the local men's chorus, he moved back into the area.

"I want the chorus and audience to have fun but also to expand musical horizons by bringing in some of the best men's choir music ever written," Markham explains.

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Lookback: RuPaul. King of Queens

By Frank Pizzoli

In 2008, when RuPaul appeared at now-defunct Club XS, he allowed me to break his long-standing rule: No rubbernecks at his sound check before the show.

I sat quietly in complete darkness as he worked through his usual run-through on every aspect of his performance later that night.

A seasoned performer, he was working with a talented technical crew that wasn't as finger-snap quick as he normally had on hand. Yet his manner was professional, warm, but firm. He seemed every bit the Southern boy raised by adults who taught him manners, charm, and to have a firm grip on life.

That firm grip is still holding on to the reins of his celebrity image. He's once again evolving.

In a recent *Rolling Stones* interview he said, "If I never go drag again after today, I don't care. It's not important to me. It never was."

What is important to "Ru," as he prefers to be called now, came through when *Central Voice* interviewed him for his local appearance at an HIV benefit.

"Hi, it's Ru," says the voice from LA on the telephone. He takes his own calls. "I just made by first cup of coffee this morning, it smells so good." He was that much at peace with himself, not an easy claim for performers often burnt from the glare of publicity.

"We live in a time when fear trumps love," he said back in 2008. "I remember the days when love topped fear," he lamented. After watching a 1979 rerun of Soul Train, he thought "those kids were having so much fun that has been weeded out of our daily lives. The Fun Gestapo runs the show now."

Yet Ru's view of the world hasn't dulled his senses.

Don't be fooled into thinking she's all gaiety and glitter. Ru has a deeply spiritual center. "We're here with a gift, our human form," she says. She imagines herself, each of us whether we realize it or not, as "observing vessels" through which life flows.

After appearing in a *Vanity Fair* photo featuring 10 divas who have promoted MAC products that direct a portion of the proceeds to AIDS organizations worldwide, Ru said, "We were given the privilege of donating $100,000 to charities. He directed $50,000 to LA's Being Alive, a well-known HIV service and $50,000 to a North Carolina program that helps Kenya grandmothers in Kenya "who must take care of their grandbabies left behind by parents who have died of AIDS," he says softly, in reverence to their mission.

Ru's personal mission is expressed in the message stitched inside each of his man suits - "You're born naked and the rest is drag."

Amen to that.

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Progressive *continued from page one*

The historic march is when Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his iconic "I Have a Dream" speech in which he called for racial justice and economic equality for all. Previously whispered about, gay civil rights leader Bayard Rustin's role in the March and movement was finally openly acknowledged. *(See sidebar)*

No one would seriously suggest that the African-American historical experience and the LGBT fight for civil rights are identical. No thoughtful person would suggest they are unrelated. They both represent a Progressive pulse in the heartbeat of the Republic.

Today, the gay community's economic issues are woven across demographics that include race, income, access to health care, housing, jobs. Poor lesbians working minimum wage jobs while raising children and the souls of poor women of color are kindred spirits. Artificial distinctions are divisive and only useful to those who want to keep folks fighting at street level while issues go unaddressed. That's how dividers conquer.

Rustin once said "we need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers."

Shanker

Lehigh Valley's Adrian Shanker is one of those troublemakers. He spoke at the March's anniversary event. President of Equality Pennsylvania from 2011-2013, he led Bethlehem's campaign to pass an anti-discrimination bill. He pushed Easton and Allentown to create domestic partnership benefits for city employees.

Shanker's remarks that day stepped outside of the gay comfort zone to acknowledge issues crossing the usual divides. He said that Pennsylvania passed "a voter ID law intended to suppress our votes." He meant everyone's vote.

Shanker talked to CV about the crossroads of LGBT and Progressive politics.

"There are issues, progressive issues, that are of concern not only to the lgbt community but to the community at large," Shanker said. As CV has written several times before: It's about policy, not people.

The Progressive Movement has embraced LGBT equality "as a core issue," Shanker says. "Pennsylvania labor unions, anti-poverty organizations, women's groups and other civil rights organizations coalesce around gay issues, including non-discrimination and marriage equality," he points out.

Does the lgbt movement embraced Progressive issues in return?

"We fight for LGBT-specific causes, such as marriage equality and non-discrimination, but many of us who advocate for LGBT equality also realize that we don't advocate in a vacuum, that the LGBT community is deeply affected by other progressive issues," Shanker says. The LGBT community "needs to stand for voting rights, immigration reform, reproductive choice and comprehensive sex education in public schools," he argues. "These issues effect all of us."

Andy Humm thinks there's a difference between what the gay community needs to do and what it actually does. He is co-anchor of Gay USA, NYC's weekly one-hour news program on LGBT issues worldwide.

"It seems to me the mainstream LGBT movement groups depend on labor for muscle and mostly don't return the favor on economic justice issues. In fact, the LGBT groups take big corporate donations from some of the worst actors in the corporate world - Citibank, Walmart, Paul Singer, David Koch - which buys those companies and individuals good will and makes the groups shut up about their injustices," Humm says..

On injustice around marriage equality, Shanker combines economics and taking vows. Often marriage equality is cast as more important to the upwardly mobile. "That's a myth," he says.

Marriage equality, Shanker says, means "the same safety nets many low and middle class families rely on are available for same-sex couples" like Social Security survivor benefits, temporary assistance for needy families, and Medicare programs. "Sure, there are also benefits that apply more to wealthier families but the issue is about equality for all of us," he said.

Observers have noted that in states passing marriage equality some donors drop out after their parochial goal is achieved. Shanker says "some donors taper off. That is deeply unfortunate. Marriage equality by itself doesn't create equality for all our community." On the broader issue of employment discrimination, EPA

He hopes as a movement can "we can galvanize the LGBT community to build a movement that lasts far beyond winning marriage equality and includes immigration, reproductive rights, safe schools for everyone, and economic justice.

GetEqual.org is galvanizing others.

With on-the-ground presence in 15 states and offices in Maryland, Ohio, and Florida, the group's co-director Felipe Sousa-Rodriguez says we focus on racial justice, immigration reform and reproductive rights. He was recently selected by the Arcus Foundation, which addresses social justice and conservation issues, to participate in their Arcus LGBT Leadership Initiative.

Sousa-Rodriguez

His organization worked directly with Planned Parenthood in Texas when that state's legislature wanted to ban abortion. "Abortion is an issue that affects lesbians," Rodriquez says.

When Florida's capital of Tallahassee saw groups occupying state capital upset over the trip on Martin versus Zimmerman decision, GetEqual joined the effort. "I slept outside the governor's office on the floor," Rodriguez said. "Crimes based on hate affect every segment of the community."

Voter suppression efforts also affect parts of the community.

"If you're right to vote is withdrawn or others work to suppress your vote at that point your sexuality doesn't matter anymore," Rodriguez said. When North Carolina tried to pass an amendment making it more difficult his organization participated in what were called "moral Monday," gatherings at which people brought attention to the effort.

"There are about 267,000 undocumented LGBT individuals in the US," Rodriguez says. "Even with the repeal of DOMA, which only affects some of these individuals, they are vulnerable to a number of fronts," he says. People with HIV disease may be denied care and transsexuals may be denied entrance.

"It's time for the LGBT community to show up for others just as they have shown up for us," Rodriguez says.

Bayard Rustin's Partner Walter Naegle Talks

Rustin and Naegle

By Frank Pizzoli

Sometimes waiting at an intersection changes your life.

That's how it happened for Walter Naegle when he met Bayard Rustin, the gay icon activist and friend of Martin Luther King Jr. during the tumultuous 1960s.

"I was waiting for the light to change at a New York City intersection. We just started talking," Naegle tells Central Voice. That was 1977. They remained a couple for the next decade until Rustin's death.

Rustin was 65. Naegle was 27. Together they forged a relationship portrayed in Brother Outsider recently rescreened in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Rustin was a visionary strategist and activist called "the unknown hero" of the civil rights movement. A disciple of Gandhi, a mentor King, and the architect of the 1963 March, he dared to live as an openly gay man during the fiercely homophobic 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. He was a Quaker and a pacifist. When Naegle answered the telephone he was working at NYC's Penn Service Center.

Around the time they met in 1977 Rustin was on his way back from Memphis where he was involved with furniture workers hoping to improve their conditions.

"From early on Bayard had a broad view of social justice issues. He was involved in union struggles, refugee affairs, and the overall struggle to make life better for as many people as possible," Naegle explains.

Rustin represents the crossroads of all social justice struggles – poverty, African-American civil rights, LGBT civil rights, economic justice, and the many overlaps among various constituent groups.

"I think over the years the LGBT movement has picked up some lessons from Bayard's playbook. The gay movement has learned the importance of coalitions in achieving their goals," Naegle said.

Same as the African-American civil rights movement, Naegle notes that there are different forces at work within the gay movement.

When asked about the differences and similarities between the 1960s assimilationist and separatist groups within the larger African-American civil rights movement and similar splits within today's gay movement, Naegle said, "There were references to this kind of notion in Bayard's own history."

Local historian Michael Long, Elizabethtown College, tells Central Voice that Rustin "was a brilliant organizer, a major coalition builder who saw connections between groups." Having edited Rustin's letters in "I Must Resist," Long is certain that he saw "the lgbt rights issue as the natural progression following the African American civil right movement".

By the time of the 1963 March and King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech, there were pressures on which positions the civil rights movement ought to support. Some leaders were opposed to the Vietnam War. Leaders with sons serving in the war supported the effort. Eventually some leaders began to doubt the effectiveness of King's nonviolent strategies to achieve their goals. Eventually the Black Panthers formed.

Similarly within the gay movement there are tensions among groups whose main emphasis has been the successful repeal of "Don't ask, Don't tell" and marriage equality and other gay activist organizations concerned with social and economic justice issues, including an end to the discrimination of LGBT employee in the workplace.

Rustin's advice to King may serve as advice to the LGBT movement.

Rustin told King when upon being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "you must speak your conscience" on a variety of social justice issues, Naegle said. "This can be difficult. Many leaders and many good people can honestly be on different sides of issues or be motivated to act by different issues." Naegle says the Human Rights Campaign and the Gay and Lesbian Task Force "do good work but not all the work."

There are lots of pages in a movement's playbook but not all of those reading the book are on the same page.

Marriage Equality Roundup: *The Push For Fifty*

BY THINKPROGRESS.ORG

Since the U.S. Supreme Court's June rulings striking down the unconstitutional Defense of Marriage Act and enabling California to resume same-sex marriages, supporters of LGBT equality have begun a full-court press to expand the number of states with full equality from 13 to 50. Here is a rundown of the legal challenges, legislative efforts, and referendum processes in states that do not yet have civil marriage.

Arkansas

Arkansas has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages and unions since 2004. In July, a group of Arkansas families filed a federal lawsuit against the state and local governments challenging whether the state constitutional ban violates the U.S. constitution. Also, while it is unlikely that an Arkansas court will rule its own state constitution unconstitutional, another group of plaintiffs have brought a state case challenging the constitutionality of the ban.

Arizona

Arizona has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages since 2008. In June, a group of activists filed paperwork to attempt to get a repeal on the 2014 ballot — but last week the group said it was tabling its efforts for the moment. Other groups are reportedly planning a 2016 repeal effort.

Colorado

Colorado has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages since 2006, but enacted a civil unions law earlier this year. LGBT rights supporters are currently plotting a path to marriage equality and openly gay House Speaker Mark Ferrandino (D) has said he expects a repeal referendum on the ballot sometime this decade if a court ruling doesn't render it unnecessary.

Florida

Florida has had a constitutional amendment banning same sex-marriages and unions since 2008. A group of LGBT rights supporters are attempting to collect enough signatures to put a repeal vote on the ballot, but such a vote would require a difficult 60 percent threshold. Equality Florida is currently seeking plaintiffs for a federal court challenge and is working to build popular supportfor repeal.

Hawaii

Hawaii has had a civil unions law since 2011. Gov. Neil Abercrombie (D), a strong supporter of LGBT rights, announced Monday that he will call the state legislature into special session beginning on October 28 to consider a marriage equality bill. Should that stall, a federal court case is also slowly working its way through the appeals process — the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has requested filings by October on an appeal of a district judge's August 2012 ruling against marriage equality.

Illinois

Illinois has had a civil unions law since 2011. A marriage equality bill passed the state Senate in February, but stalled in the Illinois House of Representatives. Supporters may try again in the fall veto session, which begins October 22, but are still working to secure the needed votes. A state court case could also bring marriage equality to the Prairie State — a Cook County Judge heard arguments last month in a same-sex marriage case and will announce whether the case will proceed on September 27.

Indiana

Indiana is one state in danger of going in the wrong direction: the Republican state legislature is considering proposing a constitutional ban on same-sex marriages. The legislature has already endorsed the amendment once — if they do so again in the next year, it would likely go before voters in 2014.

Kentucky

Kentucky has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages and unions since 2004. In July, a same-sex couple filed a federal lawsuit arguing that the state's amendment violates the U.S. constitution.

Michigan

Michigan has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages and unions since 2004. On October 1, a federal judge will hear arguments about whether the state's amendment violates the U.S. Constitution — and he has suggested that couple challenging the ban is likely to prevail.

Missouri

Missouri has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages since 2004. A group of Missourians are currently mulling a federal lawsuitchallenging the constitutionality of the state ban.

Nevada

Nevada has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages since 2002, but enacted a domestic partnership law in 2009. Earlier this year, the state legislature endorsed a repeal of the constitutional ban — if an identical proposal passes in the 2015 session, voters would see a repeal referendum on the ballot in 2016. While a federal district judge ruled against marriage equalitylast November, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has requested filings by October on an appeal of his ruling.

New Jersey

New Jersey has had a civil unions law since 2007. Gov. Chris Christie (R) vetoed a marriage equality bill last February, though the state legislature may attempt to override his veto this year. Because an earlier state Supreme Court ruling held that same-sex couples must be entitled to equal legal benefits — something rendered impossible after the U.S. Supreme Court's Defense of Marriage Act ruling granted federal rights to same-sex marriages but not civil unions — LGBT activists have asked the state courts to order marriage equality. A state judge heard arguments last month in the case and is expected to rule in the near future.

New Mexico

New Mexico has no constitutional prohibition on same-sex marriage and no explicit statutory ban — but still has not previously allowed the practice, due to an implicit ban in the language governing marriage license forms. Last month, Doña Ana County Clerk Lynn Ellins (D) announced he would begin issuing marriages licenses to same-sex couples. After three state judges also determined that any prohibition would be inconsistent with both the state and federal constitutions, seven more counties followed suit. The New Mexico Supreme Court announced Friday that it will hold a October 23 hearing to consider a statewide determination of whether same-sex marriage is legal in the state. In the meantime, the federal government is recognizing the marriages as valid.

North Carolina

North Carolina has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages and unions since last year. In July, six North Carolina familiesamended a federal case challenging the state's anti-LGBT adoption ban to expand it to challenge whether the state's constitutional ban violates the U.S. Constitution.

Ohio

Ohio has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages and unions since 2004. A group of Ohioans are collecting signatures hoping to put a repeal effort on the ballot next year, while other LGBT rights groups are still trying to determine the appropriate timing for a repeal vote. The issue could be rendered moot, depending on the results of a federal court challenge to the constitutionality of the state ban. A district judge has already granted temporary orders to two same-sex Ohio couples seeking to have their out-of-state marriages recognized by Ohio, but he has yet to issue a final ruling.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages and unions since 2004. A longstanding federal case, recently updated to reflect the Supreme Court's July rulings, is pending before a district judge.

Oregon

Oregon has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages since 2004, but has allowed domestic partnerships since 2008. A group of Oregonians are currently working to collecting 116,284 signatures by July 2014, which would allow a November 2014 repeal vote.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania has had a statutory ban on same-sex marriage since 1996. Last month, Montgomery County Registry of Wills Bruce Hanes began offering same-sex marriage licenses, after determining that the statute violates the state's constitution. Gov. Tom Corbett's (R) state health department filed suit, seeking a halt to the weddings. Last week, a commonwealth judge heard arguments on the move and vowed to rule quickly. A separate federal case wasfiled in July, claiming the state ban violated the U.S. constitution. Corbett has hired an expensive outside counsel to defend the statute. A legislative effortfaces an uphill battle in the Republican-controlled legislature.

South Carolina

South Carolina has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages and unions since 2007. A Highway Patrol trooper and her partner. filed a federal court challenge in August, arguing that that state's amendment violates the U.S. Constitution.

Utah

Utah has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages and unions since 2004. In March, a group of Utah families filed a federal suit arguing that the state's amendment violates the U.S. Constitution.

Virginia

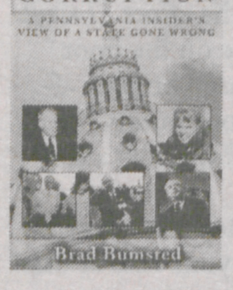
Virginia has had a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages and unions since 2006. In August, a group of families filed a federal court challenge-arguing that that state ban violates the U.S. Constitution.

If the efforts above prove successful, the number of states with marriage equality could jump from 13 to more than 30 in the next few years. Additionally, should the federal courts ultimately determine that state bans violate the federal constitution much like the Defense of Marriage Act did, marriage would become available in all 50 states.

Thinkprogress.org provides readers with a marriage equality round-up.

Pennsylvania Corruption

Between 2007 and 2012, prosecutors charged 37 public officials that had ties to the Pennsylvania State Capitol with public corruption. These charges included ex-lawmakers, legislators and a Supreme Court Justice.



Author Brad Bumsted covers the issue in his new book "Keystone Corruption: A Pennsylvania Insider's View of a State Gone Wrong". The book profiles the state's most famous political thieves and analyzes the cases of Al Benedict, Ernie Preate, Frank Gigliotti and the three Orie sisters.

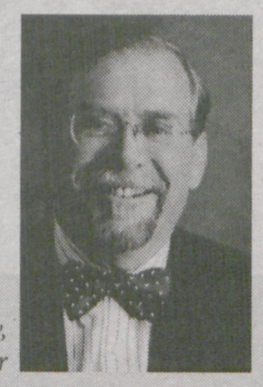
Bumsted is an award-winning Harrisburg reporter for the Pittsburgh-Tribune Review.

Meanwhile, *Business Insider* recently set on a mission to collect the data to find the most corrupt state in the United States. They used the number of convictions for corruption per capita.

If you just look at sheer number of convictions not based on per capita then Florida, New York, Texas, Pennsylvania and California are the top five.

The states with the fewest conviction rates were South Carolina, Oregon, Washington, New Hampshire, Minnesota and Utah.

Mayors Join Freedom to Marry



J. Richard Gray, Lancaster Mayor

Freedom to Marry has announced the addition of mayors from Atlanta, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Phoenix, and San Antonio as new co-chairs of Mayors for the Freedom to Marry and set a goal of reaching 500 mayors representing all 50 states.

The program, launched in January 2012 with 80 mayors, now has more than 350 mayors representing 35 states and the District of Columbia.

According to The Williams Institute's analysis of the 2010 U.S. Census, 22,336 same-sex couples are living in Pennsylvania, representing 4.5 same-sex couples per 1,000 households.

The campaign introduces five co-chairs who join current chairs Michael Bloomberg of New York, Thomas M. Menino of Boston, and Annise Parker of Houston. The new chairs are Julián Castro of San Antonio, Eric Garcetti of Los Angeles, Michael Nutter of Philadelphia, Kasim Reed of Atlanta, and Greg Stanton of Phoenix. Four out of the five new co-chairs live in states that exclude same-sex couples from marriage – something Freedom to Marry is working hard to change.

Support for the freedom to marry has reached record highs, with 58% of voters in favor, according to an ABC News poll released in March. This plurality of support holds in every region of the country: the Northeast (63% to 36%), the West (58% to 40%), the Midwest (51% to 47%), and the South (49% to 48%).

"Pennsylvania, like many states, is moving towards marriage equality, as more and more citizens and elected officials realize that inequality is not the direction of progress," said Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter.

In 2009, the U.S. Conference of Mayors unanimously approved a resolution expressing support for the freedom to marry "and the recognition and extension of full equal rights to such unions, including family and medical leave, tax equity, and insurance and retirement benefits, and opposes the enshrinement of discrimination in the federal or state constitutions."

Current Pennsylvania mayors endorsing Freedom To Marry:

John Callahan - ***Bethlehem***
Carolyn Comitta - ***West Chester***
Nicholas DeSantis - ***New Stanto***
John Fetterman - ***Braddock***
Adam Forgie - ***Turtle Creek***
Elizabeth Goreham - ***State College***
J. Richard Gray - ***Lancaster***
Sandy Green - ***Kutztown***
Rick Hoffman - ***Macungie***
Laurence Keller - ***New Hope***
Josh Maxwell - ***Downingtown***
Tim McGuire - ***Homewood***
Michael Nutter - ***Philadelphia***
Dennis O'Brien - ***Newtown***
Salvatore Panto - ***Easton***
Ed Pawlowski - ***Allentown***
Luke Ravenstahl - ***Pittsburgh***
Jose Rosado - ***Fountain Hill***
Libby White - ***Doylestown***

"Conversion Therapy" Ban Introduced in PA

State Reps. Brian Sims, D-Phila., and Gerald Mullery, D-Luzerne, introduced a bipartisan bill to protect Pennsylvania children by banning mental health providers from engaging in anti-gay "conversion therapy" for minors. State Sen. Anthony H. Williams, D-Phila./Delaware,recently introduced a similar bill in the state Senate (S.B. 872).

"Just last month, New Jersey's Republican governor and Democratic legislature worked together to ban this practice. The governor there cited 'a litany of potential ill effects of trying to change sexual orientation, including depression and suicide.' California has also passed a similar law. Pennsylvania children deserve the same protection," said Sims, a civil rights attorney and the first member of the Pennsylvania legislature elected as an out gay candidate.

It is hard to imagine that there could be anyone who would oppose this legislation

Mullery said: "When I became aware of what was involved in conversion therapy, I equated it to medical and parental bullying. Children who were subjected to this so-called therapy suffer the same effects as children who were subjected to traditional bullying, including suicide, attempted suicide and low self-esteem."

"It's been 40 years since the American Psychological Association excluded homosexuality from being classified as a mental disorder, and the APA has published studies showing that patients younger than 18 suffer from a multitude of harmful effects associated with this so-called therapy, including withdrawal and suicidal thoughts. It's time to protect Pennsylvania children from this quackery that can inflict years of harm for those who manage to survive it," Sims said.

"When a child is at his or her most vulnerable stage in life, it is appalling to think that there are adults willing and too frequently able to destroy their sense of well-being," Williams said. "That's beyond wrong. As adults, we are charged to protect children, who come in all shapes, sizes, colors and orientations. By no means should we condone any activity that would demean them, particularly in this day and age."

"In my experience, there is oftentimes a deeply rooted connection to religious fundamentalism that underscores the thought processes of many advocates of so-called 'conversion therapy,' which highlights the need for clinicians to take a hard look at their own biases and motivations for practicing under the auspices of good clinical practice and ignoring the ethical issues and very real consequences of these methods," said Monique Walker, doctoral candidate at Drexel University and Counseling Services Coordinator at the Attic Youth Center in Philadelphia, who has assisted many young people in dealing with the harms and trauma of "conversion therapy" practices.

Walker had an article published in the Journal of Feminist Family Therapy earlier this year addressing this topic within her professional field, titled "When Clients Want Your Help to 'Pray Away the Gay': Implications for Couple and Family Therapists."

"It is hard to imagine that there could be anyone who would oppose this legislation, as 'conversion therapy' has been thoroughly discredited as ineffective and harmful by nearly every legitimate mental health professional and organization," said Ed Coffin, LGBT advocate as well as campaign director and media and public relations director for Peace Advocacy Network. "We know for a fact that it's not possible to change sexual orientation and any attempt to do so is incredibly destructive."

Sims

Mullery

Williams

Michigan Attorney General Wants to Regulate Sexual Relationships

(Editor's note: This is not a story from The Onion.)

Michigan's Attorney General, Bill Schuette, has filed a brief in response to a motion for summary judgement in the Deboer v Snyder and Schuette case currently before Judge Friedman in the Eastern District Court of Michigan.

In a legal brief filed in federal court, Schuette says Michigan has an interest in regulating sexual relationships to promote "beneficial procreation"

The case was brought by a lesbian couple suing for the right to legally file joint adoption for their children. Currently second-parent adoptions are not permitted in Michigan. Last summer, the judge expanded the scope of the case beyond adoptions to include the issue of same-gender marriages in Michigan.

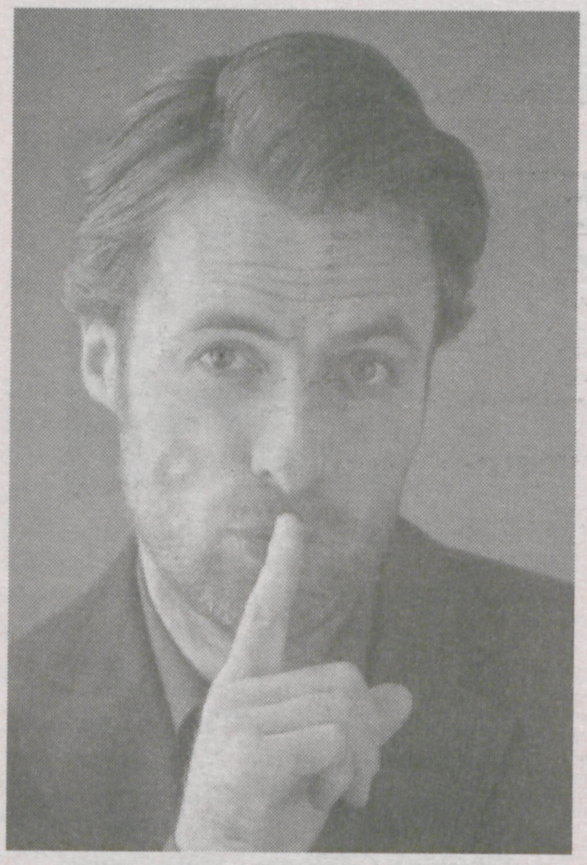
"one of the paramount purposes of marriage...is, and has always been, to regulate sexual relationships between men and women so that the unique procreative capacity of such relationships benefits rather than harms society."

-Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette

In his September 9 filing, the Attorney General's office stated that "one of the paramount purposes of marriage in Michigan — and at least 37 other states that define marriage as a union between a man and a woman — is, and has always been, to regulate sexual relationships between men and women so that the unique procreative capacity of such relationships benefits rather than harms society."

Equality Michigan has participated in two amicus briefs supporting the couple in this case's right both to adopt and marry.

Emily Dievendorf, managing director of Equality Michigan said, "This absurd overreach is a desperate move by a man with too much power. Attorney General Shuette's insistence on government in our personal lives is hypocritical, and in conflict with the US Supreme Court. Ten years ago when the Supreme Court struck down sodomy laws, and this past summer when it ruled against DOMA, it found that regulating sex for the purpose of procreation is not a role for our government. Marriage is about more than just procreation, as the Supreme Court said this June, 'marriage is a way for couples to define themselves by their commitment to each other.'"



Beware:

Sex Laws Still on The Books!

Isn't it interesting as the moral police are out there telling us what LGBT Americans can do and can't do with sexuality, that most of the moral crusaders are themselves criminals. What would happen if we enforced the laws on the books? What kind of children will be raised if we allow heterosexuals to continue violating the law. Flaunting their disrespect for laws can only bring down the moral fabric of society.

1. Merryville, Missouri: Prohibits women from wearing corsets!
2. Cali, Colombia: Prohibits bride's mother to be in the bedroom during the honeymoon.
3. Bakersfield, California: You must wear a condom if you are having sex with Satan!
4. Santa Cruz, Boliva: You are breaking the law if you have sex with both a mother and daughter at the same time (separately is fine!).
5. Indonesia: This nation has death by decapitation if you are masturbating!
6. Florida: It is illegal for a man to kiss his wife breasts!
7. Florida: It is also illegal to have sex with a porcupine (has anyone really tried?)!
8. Michigan: There is actually a law that mandates five years in prison if a man seduces an unmarried women!
9. North Carolina: The Tar Heel State has a law saying only 'the missionary position is allowed and the shades in the bedroom must be lowered.
10. Willowdale, Oregon: It is against the law to cuss and 'talk dirty' during sex.
11. Halethrorpe, Maryland: Kissing for more than a minute is illegal.
12. Indiana: Oral sex of any kind is breaking the law.
13. Alabama: All sex toys are illegal in this Dixie state.
14. Minnesota: It is against the law to have sex with a live fish (is a dead one OK?).
15. Connersville, Wisconsin: Call the National Rifle Association now! It is illegal to fire a gun while your partner is having an orgasm!

ALLENBERY PLAYHOUSE
When SANTA Met SALLY
Nov. 13 - Dec. 22

Ever wonder how Mrs. Claus became Mrs. Claus? Or for that matter, how Santa became Santa? Join us next Christmas at Allenberry to learn the true tale of how Santa and Mrs. Claus met and fell in love. Tickets: 800-430-5468

MAJESTIC THEATRE
Gettysburg College
A Chorus Line
Nov. 7-10, 7:30 p.m. & 1 p.m.

Presented by Gettysburg College Department of Theatre Arts and the Sunderman Conservatory of Music. One of the most celebrated musicals of all time! A Chorus Line is a multiple Tony-award and Pulitzer-prize winning musical combining song, dance, and compelling story that chronicles the lives of a group of actors at an audition for a Broadway musical. With unforgettable music by Marvin Hamlisch, including the songs "At the Ballet,""What I did for Love,""Dance Ten, Looks Three," and "One," A Chorus Line serves as a powerful metaphor for all human aspiration and promises to be "one singular sensation!"
Tickets: 717-337-8200; majestictheater@gettysburg.edu

Rocky Mountain Christmas
A John Denver Tribute
Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m.

Rocky Mountain Christmas is a delightful blend of traditional Christmas music along with some of your favorite John Denver songs of the season. This show will feature Chris Collins and Boulder Canyon along with special guest appearances by members of the Gettysburg Area School District's music programs.
Tickets: 717-337-8200; majestictheater@gettysburg.edu

STAND CAPITAL
Wanda Sykes
Nov.,15, 7:30 p.m.

Wanda Sykes has been called "one of the funniest stand-up comics" by her peers and ranks among Entertainment Weekly's 25 Funniest People in America. Her smart-witted stand up has sent her career in many different areas. Sykes was previously seen on several television shows over the past two years. Last year she made a return to HBO's Curb Your Enthusiasm starring opposite Larry David. www.mystrandcapitol.org

OPEN STAGE OF HARRISBURG
A Christmas Memory
Nov. 29 – Dec 29

Based on the short story by Truman Capote. An evocative musical memoir of tradition, adventure, and family. In rural Alabama, 1933, young Buddy is being raised by three eccentric cousins. He is closest to his Cousin Sook, still a child herself in many ways -- and as Christmas nears, she and Buddy gather ingredients to bake holiday gifts for those who've had a memorable impact on their lives in the past year. Approx. 2 hours and 15 minutes with one intermission.
Tickets: 717-232-OPEN (6736)

SHARADIN BIGLER THEATRE
Ephrata Performing Arts Center
Fiddler on the Roof
Dec 5-7-12-14-18-21

This world-famous, widely loved musical celebrates family in a way that transcends its exotic setting, a small village in Czarist Russia, where Tevye, a poor Jewish milkman, labors to support his strong-willed wife and five daughters. Conflicts arise when the three oldest girls wish to marry for love rather than allowing their parents and the local matchmaker to choose for them. Meanwhile, anti-Semitic persecution threatens to unravel the family's entire world. Tevye's wry sense of humor and the family's love for one another carry them through hard times.
Buy Tickets Online; Phone: (717) 733-7966

HERSHEY THEATRE
Blue Man Group
Nov. 22 - 24

BLUE MAN GROUP

Experience the Phenomenon. Blue Man Group is best known for their wildly popular theatrical shows and concerts which combine comedy, music, and technology to produce a totally unique form of entertainment. The New York Times heralds the show as "One of the most delightful performance pieces ever staged." E! Entertainment News exclaims, "Blue Man Group is what every live performance aspires to be." The Baltimore Sun raves, "Blue Man Group packs a wallop. It's a big, loud, funny, silly, visually arresting production!"
Tickets: 717-534-3405, 1-800-745-3000, HersheyTheatre.com.

War Horse
Dec. 10 - 15

War Horse

A heart-warming tale of loyalty and friendship, and winner of FIVE 2011 Tony Awards®, War Horse tells the story of young Albert and his beloved horse Joey. When Joey is sold to the cavalry and shipped from England to France, he is soon caught up in enemy fire, and fate takes him on an extraordinary journey, serving on both sides before finding himself alone in no man's land. But Albert cannot forget Joey and, still not old enough to enlist, he embarks on a treacherous mission to find him and bring him home.

WHITAKER CENTER
George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™
Presented by Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet
Dec. 14-15

TOYS come alive in Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet's enchanting production of George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™! Be delighted by the dazzling costumes, charming sets and accomplished dancers as CPYB's signature production unfolds before your eyes in this most beloved masterpiece. Set to the magical music of Tchaikovsky. Whether a holiday tradition or a first-time discovery, 'The Nutcracker' is an annual gift every family will want to be part of.
Tickets: 717-214-ARTS (2787)

Harrisburg Shakespeare Company Presents Shakespeare's "Coriolanus"

Harrisburg Shakespeare Company kicks off its 2013-2014 Mainstage Season with William Shakespeare's Coriolanus Nov. 2-24 at Gamut Classic Theatre, located on the Third Floor of Strawberry Square, Downtown Harrisburg.

Shakespeare's final tragedy is considered one of his greatest. This powerful political drama tells the story of the great Roman general whose arrogance leads to his own downfall. One of Shakespeare's most provocative plays, Coriolanus is a mesmerizing tale that unfolds as both personal tragedy and political thriller. From exalted war hero – to heavy handed politician to finally, exile – Coriolanus is manipulated by his power hungry mother Volumnia and his unwillingness to compromise his principles as his world spirals out of control in his crusade for vengeance.

SEEN & HEARD...

Paper Lion Gallery Hosts Chamber

The Paper Lion Gallery, Lemoyne, hosted the Central Pennsylvania Chamber of Commerce Sept. 19. With 54 in attendance, members, guests, and prospective members mingled in a relaxed networking atmosphere. "We love doing this each year, bringing everyone together," Bill Grace, left, said. From left, Jim Hadfield and Grace, gallery co-owners.

Capital BlueCross Sponsors Whitaker Center

Whitaker Center recently announced Capital BlueCross is the new presenting sponsor of the center's performances for the next five years. "At Capital BlueCross, we recognize the positive influence the arts and culture have on shaping a healthy and engaged community," said Gary D. St. Hilaire, Capital BlueCross president and CEO. "Since 1999, central Pennsylvania has come to know Whitaker Center as a place to discover it all, including first-class performing arts. Some of music's most talented artists have performed in our capital city because of Whitaker Center," said Dr. Michael Hanes, Whitaker Center president and CEO. Previous entertainers have included B.B. King, The Beach Boys, David Sandborn, Doc Severinson, Garrison Keillor, the Indigo Girls, Joan Baez, Lucinda Williams, Michael Bolton, Brandi Carlile, and the Tedeschi Trucks Band.

New LGBT Homeless Program Reviewed

The Tree House at Alder Health and Metropolitan Community Church, Harrisburg hosted 15 people for a review of Alder Health's new LGBT homeless program. As many as 40% of homeless youth and young adults identify as LGBT. Attendees learned how they can get involved. Info: 1.800.867.1550; www.thetreehouseatalder.org

In 2012, we supported over 250 local events and donated over 43,000 bottles of water.

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LGBT center

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www.centralpalgbtcenter.org
(717) 920-9534

Sorry to Disappoint: No Gay "Chaos"

Sept. 21 marked the second anniversary of the end of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT), a law that prohibited qualified gay and lesbian Americans from serving openly in the armed forces. Contrary to the arguments made by many who sought to keep the discriminatory policy in place, the evidence suggests that the impact on our Armed Forces has been a positive one.

"Two years after the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, the dire warnings by the opponents of lifting the ban are still utterly laughable," said Human Rights Campaign (HRC) president Chad Griffin. "The end of DADT didn't have a single negative effect, and for personnel now serving openly, repeal transformed their lives for the better."

At the time, repeal of the law enjoyed widespread support among military leadership and the American public. Yet supporters of the discriminatory policy alleged that allowing openly-gay and lesbian Americans to serve would cause great detriment to the Armed Forces, and endanger the lives of service members. Dire and outlandish predictions used to argue against repeal of DADT have since been debunked.

Prediction: *"[Lifting the ban]* may even prove decisive to the viability of the all-volunteer force. That viability may, in turn, determine our ability to avoid in the years ahead -- as we have for the past four decades -- a return to conscription to meet our requirements for warriors in those conflicts." *[Frank Gaffney, Jr., Center for Security Policy, 2011]*

Truth: Military recruitment has met or exceeded goals for both FY2012 and FY2013; "In FY2011 and FY2012, all of the Active Components achieved their recruit quantity goals and recruit quality was very strong. Retention also remained strong, with all of the Services close to or exceeding their goals. Nearly all of the Reserve Components met or exceeded their quantity goals, while quality remained high." *[Congressional Research Service, May 2013]*

Prediction: "I hope that when we pass this legislation that we will understand that we are doing great damage. And we could possibly and probably… harm the battle effectiveness vital to the survival of our young men and women in the military." *[Sen. John McCain, December 2010]*

Truth: Repeal was "a nonevent" for the Marine Corps. "I'm very pleased with how it has gone." *[Gen. James Amos, November 2011]*

Prediction: "The core values of the military profession would be seen by many to have changed fundamentally if homosexuals were allowed to serve. This would undermine institutional loyalty and the moral basis for service, sacrifice, and commitment."*[Military Working Group on homosexuality in the military, 1993]*

Truth: "Our nation has always benefited from the service of gay and lesbian soldiers, sailors, airmen, and coast guardsmen, and Marines. Now they can serve openly, with full honor, integrity and respect. This makes our military and our nation stronger, much stronger. The Department of Defense is very proud of its contributions to our nation's security. We're very proud of everything the gay and lesbian community have contributed and continue to contribute. With their service, we are moving closer to fulfilling the country's founding vision, that all of us are created equal." *[Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, June 2013]*

Following a U.S. Supreme Court decision striking down Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), same-sex marriages are now recognized by the Department of Defense. HRC continues to push for full equality in the armed forces.

"In light of DADT repeal, the sacrifices made by all who serve, as well as by their families, should be valued and recognized, and this country owes these heroes every possible measure of support," continued Griffin. "Inequality in the military persists, however, and we've got to keep fighting to ensure that discrimination is erased once and for all," he said.

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Ask Dr. del Sol:

Q: My parents had heart disease, and very bad teeth – is there a relationship between the two?

Tammy del Sol: There are more and more studies showing links between periodontal disease (the oral infection of your gums and the bone that supports your teeth) and heart disease. "Bad teeth" can be defined many ways – but if you mean that they had many teeth extracted because they eventually became loose and infected, then your folks probably were dealing with perio disease. Bacteria that causes perio disease, courses through your blood stream. Researchers have discovered that the periodontal disease-causing bacteria is the same bacteria lined in the arteries of people with heart disease. So yes, there is a link. The exact pathway or relationship between the two is not clear yet. *(Check out more, at WebMD.com)*

Q: I don't want to have heart disease. Are you saying that if I brush and floss I won't get heart disease?

TdS: No, I am not saying that. What I am saying is that there is a link between the two diseases. The verdict is still out on exactly how they are tied to each other. It's kind of like the chicken and the egg mystery. But let's look at it this way: Why contribute to heart disease if we don't have to?? Brush several times a day. Thoroughly. Get a water pik and use it, every day. Eliminate as much bacteria from getting into your blood stream as possible. See your dentist at least twice a year for regular exams and hygiene appointments. Ask them how good a job you are doing with your home care. Ask them to give you tips on how you can do a better job.

Q: My parents had dentures. I guess after you lose all your teeth, you don't have to worry about all that nasty periodontal bacteria in your bloodstream anymore.

TdS: Guess again. I can't tell you how many folks I see who have dentures or partials who do not know how to properly clean them. As a result, those people still have tons of bacteria coursing through their bloodstream from all the debris and plaque left on those dentures. Even though someone may have full dentures, it is still important for them to come in and see their dentist at least once a year so that we can make sure they are taking good care of their denture and cleaning it well. We also like to do a oral cancer screening at that time and make sure everything looks good. Oral cancers, suspicious lesions may still occur after someone gets dentures. Always better safe than sorry.

Right-wing to Matthew Shepard:

Do Not Rest in Peace

Luke Brinker on Media Matters

Right-wing media outlets are already celebrating a forthcoming book that claims that brutal 1998 murder of gay Wyoming teen Matthew Shepard - which became a rallying cry for LGBT activists - was actually fueled more by drug use than anti-gay bias.

In *The Book of Matt: Hidden Truths about the Murder of Matthew Shepard*, journalist Stephen Jimenez argues that Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson bludgeoned Shepard in a meth-fueled rage. Jimenez minimizes the role of anti-gay bias in the murder, writing that Shepard and McKinney had previously had sex and done meth together (an assertion that McKinney himself denies).

Although his report of a sexual history between Shepard and McKinney is new, Jimenez's central thesis - that drugs were the motivating factor in Shepard's murder - has been called into question before.

In November 2004, Jimenez co-produced a piece on the Shepard murder for ABC News' 20/20. GLAAD highlighted key shortcomings in 20/20's report, including the lack of hard evidence that drugs were a factor and its failure to point out that McKinney himself had cited ant-gay bias as a central element in the case, even attempting to employ a "gay panic" defense at trial. Shepard's mother also condemned the report, criticizing its selective reading of evidence and accusing ABC of taking her comments out of context.

The 20/20 report neglected to mention another crucial detail: that Jimenez was a friend of Tim Newcomb, Henderson's defense attorney.

Judy Shepard and CV Publisher Frank Pizzoli, 2004

Most disturbingly, email correspondence revealed that the Jimenez had already decided that Shepard's murder wasn't an anti-gay hate crime before 20/20 even started its reporting. As Gay City News reported in December 2004:

Roughly two months before reporting began for a "20/20" piece on the Matthew Shepard killing, [Stephen Jimenez,] the freelance producer who sold the story to the ABC program had decided that methamphetamine motivated the murder and not anti-gay bias.

And barely two months into a six-month span of reporting on the piece, a "20/20" producer wrote in an e-mail that the "'hate crime' motivation of Shepard's death" was a "flawed theory."

Sean Maloney, a senior attorney at Willkie, Farr and Gallagher who represents the Matthew Shepard Foundation, said of "20/20"'s apparent prejudgment of the story, "This strikes us as bad journalism. There is a significant body of evidence that says that anti-gay bias played a role in Matt's death."

The November 26 story said that Aaron McKinney who, along with Russell Henderson, murdered Shepard on October 6, 1998 was fueled by meth. [emphasis added]

Ten years after he'd already made up his mind, Jimenez is publishing his book.

The Matthew Shepard Foundation has already condemned Jimenez's theory, telling the Huffington Post: Attempts now to rewrite the story of this hate crime appear to be based on untrustworthy sources, factual errors, rumors and innuendo rather than the actual evidence gathered by law enforcement and presented in a court of law. We do not respond to innuendo, rumor or conspiracy theories. Instead we recommit ourselves to honoring Matthew's memory, and refuse to be intimidated by those who seek to tarnish it.

...right-wing media outlets have already jumped on Jimenez's theory to claim that the problem of anti-LGBT hate crimes has been exaggerated.

Nevertheless, right-wing media outlets have already jumped on Jimenez's theory to claim that the problem of anti-LGBT hate crimes has been exaggerated.

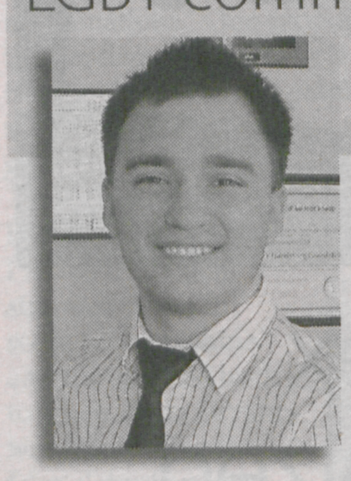
WND columnist Jack Cashill gloated that the book undermines the efforts of the "gay grievance industry" to draw attention to hate crimes. The Shepard case, Cashill wrote, highlights how the LGBT movement's "coordination and ... duplicity" have promoted the false narrative that anti-LGBT violence is actually a problem.

Austin Ruse - who in July celebrated Russia's brutal crackdown on LGBT people - took to Breitbart.com to blast "Matthew Shepard Inc." for promoting the "lie" that homophobia had anything to do with Shepard's murder. PJ Media's Ed Driscoll touted Ruse's report on the book, asserting that Shepard's death had been "politicize[d]" by a "paranoid" left desperate to advance the hate crime narrative. A guest blogger on Gateway Pundit echoed Driscoll's argument, writing that Jimenez's book "cast[s] a terrible light on a media that has long been anxious to build a narrative hostile to mainstream America."

Even sources outside the right-wing media have been taken by Jimenez and his argument. Writing for The Jewish Daily Forward, Kenneth S. Stern - an attorney and gay rights supporter who discloses that he and Jimenez went to high school together - calls the theory promoted by The Book of Matt "compelling." Stern made no note of the problems that plagued Jimenez's earlier work for 20/20.

Amid the debate sparked by Jimenez's book, it's critical not to lose sight of the reality of anti-LGBT hate crimes. According to FBI figures, there were an estimated 1,300 hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation in 2011, the most recent year for which statistics are available. Even in parts of the country considered LGBT-friendly, anti-LGBT violence is a pervasive - even worsening - problem. New York City, for instance, is on track to see a doubling of anti-LGBT hate crimes by the end of 2013. These are figures that hate crime denialists and Matthew Shepard truthers can't dispute.

LGBT community center coalition



By Louie Marven
Executive Director
LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central PA

Dickinson College Archives Collaboration Allows Center to Grow LGBT History Project

Archival and artifact donations for the LGBT History Project are now housed at the Dickinson College Archives.

The LGBT History Project, which began August 2012 through The Center's Aging with Pride Initiative, seeks to document, record, archive, and present the history of the LGBT community of central Pennsylvania, a history overlooked by mainstream society.

The LGBT History Project collects and presents the stories of LGBT history in central Pennsylvania as told by those who lived them, through written accounts, and video interviews. To date, volunteers have conducted more than 20 interviews, with more than 60 individuals on the waiting list.

Another key element of this project is to collect donations of photos, documents, and other artifacts that help tell the stories and memories of central Pennsylvania's LGBT community. To support this goal, the center has worked collaboratively with Dickinson College to establish procedures for receiving archival and artifact donations for the project, to be documented, catalogued and housed as a special collection at the Dickinson College Archives. Dickinson College student Mana Shaw has begun an internship working with our special collection.

Please consider donating archival or artifact materials to the project.

Donations can be dropped off by appointment to the center or directly to Dickinson College Archives. A Deed of Gift/Accession Record form must accompany all donated materials, and can be found at the project's website, centralpalgbtcenter.org/lgbt-history-project, or by contacting project chair Barry Loveland at history@centralpalgbtcenter.org. This is an ongoing project and there is no deadline to participate.

As the project grows, the center will encouraging the community to learn about local LGBT history through presentations, exhibits, and eventually online virtual archives that present the stories and memories of the community. LGBT History Project volunteers have enhanced center programming already. In October, volunteers presented and organized activities with Common Roads youth, as well as with the center's Women's Group and Aging with Pride Initiative in honor of LGBT History Month.

History Project volunteers have also been busy telling the broader community about LGBT histories. Steering committee member Lonna Malmsheimer presented at Penn State Hershey Medical Center and chair Barry Loveland presented at the Dauphin County Diversity Networking Forum in October. The Dickinson College Archives had the center's special collection available to the public in the Waidner-Spahr Library throughout October, giving the public another opportunity to connect with these stories.

Knowing our history is important to the LGBT community because the evolution of civil rights is built on the successes of the past. Understanding the history of this struggle for equality helps put into perspective how the movement has developed, matured and provides a sense of accomplishment and inspiration for future efforts.

The mission of the LGBT Center of Central PA is to create common ground for the LGBT community and allies in central Pennsylvania by providing services through educational, cultural, and community activities that foster wholeness.

All Legal Same-Sex Marriages Recognized for Federal Tax Purposes

The U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) have ruled that same-sex couples, legally married in jurisdictions that recognize their marriages, will be treated as married for federal tax purposes. The ruling applies regardless of whether the couple lives in a jurisdiction that recognizes same-sex marriage or a jurisdiction that does not recognize same-sex marriage.

The ruling implements federal tax aspects of the June 26th Supreme Court decision invalidating a key provision of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act.

"Today's ruling provides certainty and clear, coherent tax filing guidance for all legally married same-sex couples nationwide. It provides access to benefits, responsibilities and protections under federal tax law that all Americans deserve," said Secretary Jacob J. Lew. "This ruling also assures legally married same-sex couples that they can move freely throughout the country knowing that their federal filing status will not change."

Under the ruling, same sex couples will be treated as married for all federal tax purposes, including income and gift and estate taxes. The ruling applies to all federal tax provisions where marriage is a factor, including filing status, claiming personal and dependency exemptions, taking the standard deduction, employee benefits, contributing to an IRA, and claiming the earned income tax credit or child tax credit.

Any same-sex marriage legally entered into in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, a U.S. territory, or a foreign country will be covered by the ruling. However, the ruling does not apply to registered domestic partnerships, civil unions, or similar formal relationships recognized under state law.

Legally-married same-sex couples generally must file their 2013 federal income tax return using either the "married filing jointly" or "married filing separately" filing status.

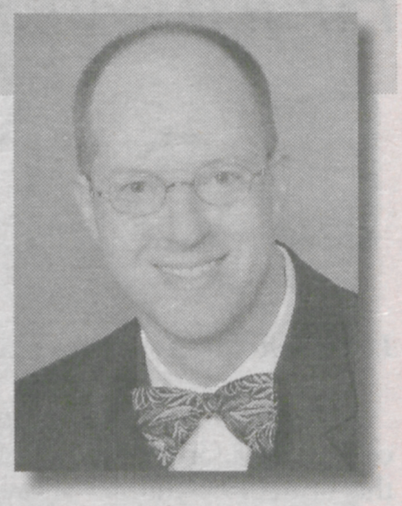
Individuals who were in same-sex marriages may, but are not required to, file original or amended returns choosing to be treated as married for federal tax purposes for one or more prior tax years still open under the statute of limitations.

Generally, the statute of limitations for filing a refund claim is three years from the date the return was filed or two years from the date the tax was paid, whichever is later. As a result, refund claims can still be filed for tax years 2010, 2011, and 2012. Some taxpayers may have special circumstances (such as signing an agreement with the IRS to keep the statute of limitations open) that permit them to file refund claims for tax years 2009 and earlier.

Additionally, employees who purchased same-sex spouse health insurance coverage from their employers on an after-tax basis may treat the amounts paid for that coverage as pre-tax and excludable from income.

legal column

By Leo L. Dunn, Attorney at Law



Winds of Change: Time to get married?

The Supreme Court's *United States v. Windsor* decision is starting to be understood.

Section 3 of the federal DOMA made it illegal for the federal government to recognize a same sex marriage for any federal purpose. This meant the 1,100 plus federal benefits and burdens attached to marriage were not applicable to married same sex couples. Some of the major ones are filing a joint tax return, exemption for the federal estate tax, social security death benefits, and taxation of health insurance covering a spouse based on such insurance being imputed income to the employee.

The court decided DOMA Section 3 was unconstitutional in regards to valid same sex marriages. It did not give guidance on whether federal agencies should use the 'rule of residence' or the 'rule of celebration.' The rule of residence restricts the federal agency to recognizing marriages based on the state of domicile at the time of application for the benefit. Here in Pennsylvania, this means that no federal benefit could be accessed because our state of residence does not consider a same sex marriage to be valid. In contrast, the rule of celebration states that the federal agency will consider any marriage to be valid if it was recognized as valid by the jurisdiction where the marriage occurred. The rule of celebration allows the federal agency to give the benefit regardless of whether the state you reside in recognizes your marriage.

Federal Tax Filing and Estate Tax

The IRS has decided that they will follow the rule of celebration. This means that all same sex couples who are married in a state (or other country) that recognized their marriage must file either as "married filing jointly" or as "married filing separately." No more married gay couples filing singly allowed. The IRS is also allowing couples to file amended returns for previous years in which the couple was married. In the case of a couple where one spouse stays at home with children or only works a part-time or low paying job, the couple's overall federal tax burden should decrease. However, if both are high wage earners with few deductions and very similar incomes, their tax burden will generally increase. In cases where one person carried the other on their health benefits package it means the imputed income penalty goes away and can be reclaimed back to the date their marriage occurred. Same sex couples will no longer be taxed on the portion of the deceased spouse's estate passed to the other spouse. This only affects people who have estates large enough to trigger this tax. The current estate threshold is $5 million.

Social Security Death Benefits

The Social Security Administration has decided to continue to follow the rule of residence (for now). A same sex individual whose spouse died is eligible to receive SS death benefits if they are residing in a state that recognizes the marriage. This includes a $255 lump sum payment and if the spouse's SS payment was higher than the survivor's, they could elect to receive the deceased spouse's monthly payment instead of their lower amount.

Pensions

The Department of Labor and Industry has decided to follow the rule of celebration. This means that ERISA spousal benefits will apply to same sex couples.

With all these great things happening, should you unmarried same sex couples run to Annapolis or Reoboth and get married? Maybe. Here are some things to think about: How old are you? Are your incomes such that it will lower your taxes? Do either of you have ERISA-covered pensions? How is your health? Does your employer have a nondiscrimination policy that covers sexual orientation?

First, if you are still employed, realize that employers in Pennsylvania may fire you because you are gay and you have no legal recourse unless you live in a municipality that has a nondiscrimination ordinance covering sexual orientation. This may mean getting married right now is a bad idea from a practical viewpoint. Remember marriages are public records.

Second, assuming you do not need to worry about employment, would you benefit from filing taxes jointly? To decide, use last year's income information and do a mock "married filing jointly" tax return. Do you pay more or less?

Third, are you at an age, or is one or both person's health such that one of you is likely to have a health issue that could render you incompetent within the next five to ten years? I ask this given my assumption that within ten years Pennsylvania will recognize same sex marriages. Why does it matter? If one partner becomes incapacitated (incompetent to make decisions) one day and the next week Pennsylvania recognizes same sex marriages, the couple can never get married and will always be legal strangers. No federal marriage benefits and a 15% state inheritance tax penalty.

In contrast, if they get married today in Maryland, tomorrow one becomes incapacitated and two years from now Pennsylvania recognizes same sex marriage they not only receive the applicable federal benefits, but any state penalties, like the 15% inheritance tax, disappear the moment Pennsylvania recognizes the marriage. It doesn't matter that one became incompetent.

Consider all of these and more before you decide when to get married.

Leo Dunn is an attorney and counselor-at-law practicing in the central Pennsylvania area with a focus on the estate planning needs of the GLBT community. He may be reached at leo@leodunnlaw.com, leodunnlaw@gmail.com, *or 717-503-1207.*

noah's ark veterinary center

By Dr. Jose Venereo

Ghouls, goblins, turkeys and Santa!

The holiday season is upon us. For us, this means eating holiday food and winterizing our homes and cars. For our pets, this is the season for begging!

Keep in mind that the holidays can pose a great risk to our furry friends should they get into foods, plants or other items that are toxic to them.

Here are a few items to keep away from your dog or cat this holiday season.

Candy - Some candy contains the sugar substitute xylitol. Xylitol can cause hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) when the pancreas confuses it for real sugar and releases insulin. This can cause weakness, disorientation, tremors or seizures. Xylitol can also cause liver damage. A 10 pound dog could be poisoned with xylitol after eating as little as 1.5 sticks of gum.

Chocolate - In pets, chocolate causes delayed nervous system signs. Even a small amount of dark chocolate can be toxic to a pet.

Onions - In pets, onions can cause a potentially fatal anemia (low red blood cell count) if left untreated. This includes onion powder.

Yeast dough - If pets consume yeast dough, their stomachs expand causing abdominal pain and they can also die of alcohol poisoning.

Alcoholic beverages - Alcohol ingestion can cause respiratory depression (difficulty breathing) and metabolic abnormalities.

Poinsettias - If ingested, these are locally irritating to the mouth and stomach, and may cause mild vomiting or nausea.

Mistletoe - If ingested, mistletoe can cause cardiovascular (heart) problems but usually causes gastrointestinal upset.

Holly - If ingested, holly can cause vomiting, nausea, diarrhea and lethargy (decreased energy).

Antifreeze - To pets, antifreeze has a very pleasant taste. However, very small amounts of antifreeze can cause acute kidney failure and death. If you suspect your pet has consumed antifreeze, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Ice melting products - Signs of toxicity are dependent upon ingredients. These products can cause skin and mouth irritation, excessive drooling, depression or vomiting.

Rat and mouse killer - These are used more commonly in colder weather. Some rat and mouse baits contain warfarin, which causes internal bleeding. Others contain cholecalciferol, which causes calcium abnormalities and kidney failure. Check the product and see what it contains and place products in areas that are inaccessible to your companion animals.

A final helpful hint: Watch your pet closely with their holiday presents. Not every toy is pet-safe.

Hopefully these tips provide guidelines to improve your pet's safety. If you suspect your pet got into something toxic, contact your veterinarian or closest pet emergency center immediately. Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Source: veterinarypartner.com

Noah's Ark Veterinary Center, 6325 Chelton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17112, (717)652-5923

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Community Needs to Confront Anti-Gay Propaganda

By Alvin McEwen

The recent passage of an LGBT nondiscrimination ordinance in San Antonio highlights yet again why the LGBT community urgently needs to call out the propaganda that serves to demonize our community.

Before San Antonio City Council voted for the ordinance, members of the LGBT community had to sit through demeaning testimony that cast them as "promiscuous abominations." One supposedly well-meaning gentleman even took it upon himself to school everyone in graphic detail about sodomy, thereby invoking the stereotype of gay men wallowing in bodily wastes.

I personally felt nauseated when I read the tweets about the testimony. I felt as if I'd been strapped down in some time machine and transported back to when Anita Bryant was trumpeting the false claim that gays "recruit" children to supposedly "replenish" our ranks.

It was such a long time ago that Bryant smeared the gay community, but here we are, decades later, hearing the same lies in spite of the fact that we are supposed to be a bit more enlightened. After all, isn't this the post-Will & Grace era in which the LGBT community are no longer consigned to the closets of fear, stereotypes, and self-hatred?

So why did so many people in San Antonio freely embrace some of the worst and most nauseating stereotypes about the LGBT community?

To paraphrase Shakespeare, the fault lies not in our stars but in ourselves. The LGBT community has deceived itself into thinking that if we just sidestep the lies and distortions and solely focus on "telling our stories" as ordinary people seeking fairness under the American system, our problems with those who oppose our right to equality will dissipate.

It's high time that the LGBT community realize that this belief is a false bill of goods that serves as a pitiful Band-Aid to a problem that requires more than stories designed to yank at the heart strings; indeed, such efforts make it look as if we are begging for "tolerance."

For every one LGBT individual who successfully educates his or her neighbor, organizations such as the National Organization for Marriage, the Family Research Council, and the American Family Association send out press releases to thousands of people, spinning tales of gays persecuting Christians, diseased gays who live shorter lifespans than heterosexuals, or gays who enjoy abusive relationships when they are not seeking to harm children.

We are dealing with a veritable juggernaut of lies not unlike those spread about African Americans by segregationists, or those spread about Jewish people by anti-Semites. The problem is that we don't take this juggernaut seriously. We laugh at the outrageous lies uttered about us by Bryan Fischer of the American Family Association, Peter LaBarbera of Americans for Truth, or Matt Barber of the Liberty Counsel, but we fail to see that by not publicly and forcefully refuting these lies, we give them a clear field to influence Americans.

When we underestimate the comments and claims that deliberately cast us as the dangerous "other," we forget that they do in fact move a significant part of the population, either because of those people's religious beliefs or because Fischer and company are so adept at infusing fear of a gay takeover in their minds.

We are consistently under the illusion that addressing this propaganda gives it power, but we have the entire idea backwards. Our refusal to confront this propaganda is the very thing that gives it power.

Until the LGBT community and our leaders declare war against the lies and liars and make a serious effort to confront this propaganda head-on, America will have serious problems seeing the real LGBT community. They will have problems seeing us as tax-paying citizens who are concerned about our families, our children, and our loved ones just like every other American citizen.

Instead, they see a false image of LGBT persons as hedonistic, intolerant hypocrites who are out to "force" people to "accept" our supposed "lifestyle" while we "recruit" children or "persecute" Christians. These misconceptions will continue to nip at our heels, undermining any progress we make at attaining equality.

Are we ever going to turn around and confront these false images and the parties who push them?

Alvin McEwen is the author of How They See Us: Unmasking the Religious Right War on Gay America, a short but definitive guide to calling out and refuting homophobic propaganda. The book is available for free on Scribd. You can also obtain it for free by emailing McEwen at charlekenghis@aol.com.

From Cuba *continued from page one*

and minds of the Cuban people was something we experienced very deeply," José said.

An experience with his sister, Gladys Maria, is etched into Jose's memory.

"One day my sister came home from school and told my father she loved Castro more than she loved him," José said. Her behavior reflected what she had been taught in school. The revolution touched every aspect of Cuban life, including the relationship between a father and his daughter.

Jose recalls with stunning clarity a concrete wall he would pass with elders as they walked to regular destinations. The wall was about 12 high. It was stained with blood. You could see where the bullets hit the wall, after passing through people. Elders explained in somber voices, "This is where they shoot political prisoners," Jose says. That moment is frozen in his memory.

By late 1971 José's family moved to Madrid Spain. Several years later, the family migrated again to Puerto Rico. Eventually through hard work and education José became a doctor of veterinary science, landed in the region by the year 2000. A year later, he purchased his veterinary practice. Jose sings with Harrisburg Men's Chorus.

Madrid

In 1971, Madrid was not a place open to foreigners. "There were not many jobs and a Cuban was treated like he was taking a job away from a Spaniard," Jose remembers.

Although schools were private and Spain had no official state religion, they were all coincidentally Roman Catholic. Both countries' populations spoke Spanish, and even with the many dialects that comprise a language, Jose and his family were able to adequately communicate and enjoy Spanish life. "We went to bull fights which were like baseball in Spain," José said.

"My father worked in a market lifting boxes and had several hernia surgeries because he worked so hard," José said. Eventually his father found work in a Cuban restaurant that eased the family's plight. Although US relatives occasionally sent money to help the family survive, Jose says they were never hungry. "There was no room for excess. When we would go to market my mother would say touch with your eyes not your hands."

As if the family's story need be any more legendary, add a literary twist only a kind fate could provide.

New York

By 1975, the family moved to Tarrytown, New York, the setting for Washington Irving's classic 1820 short story "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and now a popular TV show. Set in the Dutch countryside of 1790, Tarrytown is nestled in a secluded glen called Sleepy Hollow, renowned for ghosts and a haunting atmosphere that teases the imaginations of inhabitants. The plot follows police constable Ichabod Crane, played by Johnny Depp in a 1999 movie version, sent from New York City to investigate a series of murders in Sleepy Hollow by a mysterious Headless Horseman.

"What everyone remembers about Sleepy Hollow is the Headless Horseman," Jose said, the ghost of a Hessian trooper who had his head shot away by a stray cannonball during the American Revolutionary War, eerily similar to Jose's story of the wall where political prisoners were shot for their beliefs.

Gay man

José, 46, did not come out of the closet until he was 32.

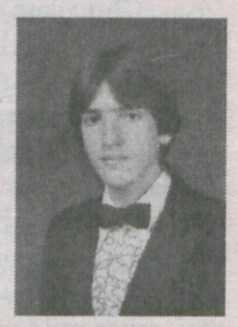
Like all Latin cultures, Cuban culture is embedded in "Machismo," a belief in the supremacy of men over women that also sees gay men as without masculinity.

"I had an openly gay uncle and cousin. My family would make unkind remarks about them so I knew very early in life what being different was all about," Jose said.

Like children who are bullied for being gay, or anyone bullied for being different, Jose absorbed the negative messages.

"I was a big homophobe. I dated married men. I convinced myself that if they were married they couldn't be gay. And because I was having sex with a married man who wasn't gay, I couldn't be gay either," José said of the tortured logic of his earlier years.

"My father thought I was gay because I had been traumatized. He thought somewhere early in my life I had an unrequited crush on a girl. What I had were many unacknowledged questions about men," José said laughing aloud.



Jose Venereo in high school

"Today, I like myself very much," he says with a grin.

Personal, political

Fully aware of his family's history and knowing firsthand the effects of both political repression and unkind remarks about being gay, José has developed an interesting blend of political views.

"I am a citizen of the United States of America," José explains, the Americas extend across two continents. A portion of the Americas is the United States of America," José says.

"I firmly believe that when someone migrates to the United States they have a duty and a responsibility to learn English as their first language," José says with conviction.

He also says that immigrants should keep their native tongue alive and learn as many other languages as possible. "Knowing as much about the world as you can is the best medicine against bigotry," José said.

"There's absolutely nothing wrong with a public policy that may say we have a standard language. We cannot possibly start to produce government documents in an endless number of languages. Migration to the US changes over time and we cannot eventually accommodate all the different languages on the planet," José said.

Jose does not mean that immigrant cultures and languages should be disregarded or disrespected.

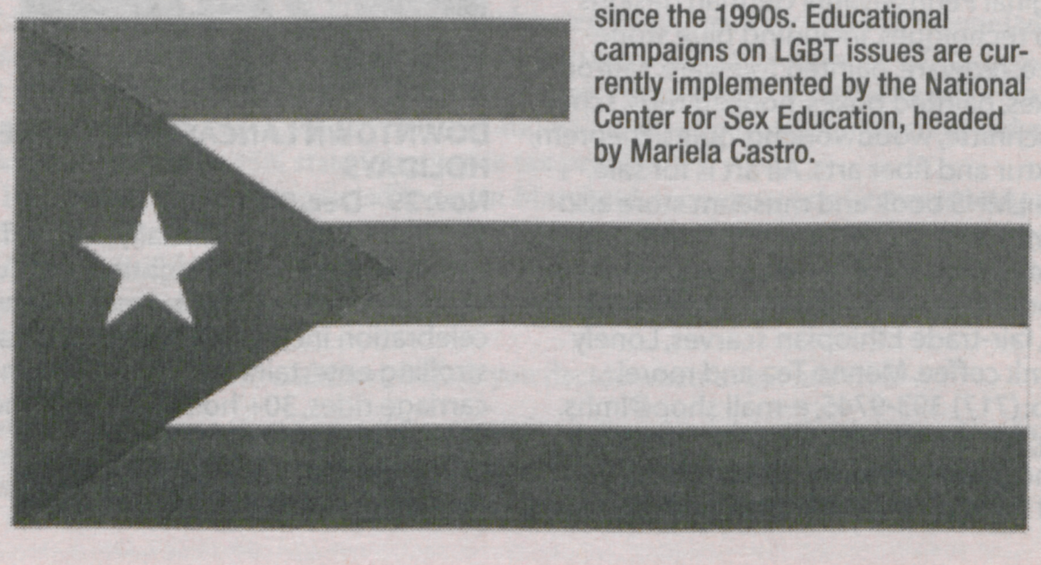
"Everyone's heritage deserves respect. But each who comes to the United States of America has an obligation to pull together, to be good community members, and to create the strongest economy and communities they possibly can," José said.

Not having a common set of standards for language, José thinks, contributes to the disintegration of American culture. "We need to pull together, find what we share in common."

"What's important, whether you are gay or straight, born here or migrate here, is to overcome obstacles, make success your goal," Jose concludes.

Gays in Cuba:

- **Private, non-commercial sexual relations between same-sex consenting adults 16 and over have been legal in Cuba since 1979, although same-sex relationships are not presently recognized by the state as a possible marriage.**
- **Public antipathy towards LGBT people is high, reflecting regional norms. This has eased somewhat since the 1990s. Educational campaigns on LGBT issues are currently implemented by the National Center for Sex Education, headed by Mariela Castro.**



MCC column

By Rev. Lori Rivera, Pastor
MCC of the Spirit

A Cleansing Breeze

While I can definitely say that this is probably the mildest summer I have every experience, I welcome that first crisp fall morning with its gentle cool breeze. I walk out of the house, stepping lively (for me) I realize, "I need a jacket." So I quietly retrace me steps into the house, pick up my jacket and then go on with my day enjoying the coolness and clean crispness of the air.

The crisp fall morning has a "cleanness" to it. The slight cooling breeze has the similar results as that of a broom. The breeze sweeps in and takes out the dirt and odors in the air. It leaves behind a freshness. With this freshness is a renewed hope and determination to do more or do better in my endeavors or to be more of who I am.

This seems like an awful lot to expect from one cool fall morning. Yet many times I think of the experience of this crisp, cool morning as representing my life with God.

I equate the Spirit of God with the cool breeze. Just as the cool breeze seems to clear the air, when God came into my life the Holy Spirit swept away past wrongs. This sweeping left behind a cleanness; a hope for the future; a desire to do more for God; and to be true to who I am.

Again it might seem like a lot to expect from God. Fortunately for all of us this is exactly what we can expect from God. This is what it means to be in relationship with God, to have a personal connection. God will come into all of our lives, sweep out the old, the worn, the wrongs, the worries, the burdens, and replace all of it with a freshness of life.

Unlike the fall breeze that blows in unknown directions, we must ask the Spirit of God to come in and sweep us clean. It won't just happen while we stand around or are involved in our lives, God doesn't enter in to where God hasn't been invited.

And just as in the world after the cool breeze is gone, dust and dirt will begin to accumulate again. So too does dirt begin to enter into our lives if we are not diligent and observant. Being sweep clean is not a one-time event, but a continuous process in our lives with God. Over time the process changes, as we mature in our relationship with God and learn more about the characteristics of God and how we relate to God and God's world. What has to be sweep out is not the same and the process will continue to enable us to grow in our relationship with God.

I encourage you this fall, to feel that cool, gentle breeze as it removes the odors from the air. I encourage you to examine your relationship with God and allow the Spirit of God to sweep into your life to give it a new freshness or to renew its freshness.

Come and join us for worship services on Sunday mornings at 10am. The first Sunday of each month we have a free fellowship breakfast that begins at 8am.

Serbian Pride: Hundreds Take to Streets

BY KRISTI PINDERI
REPORTING FROM BELGRADE

Hundreds of LGBT activists marched Sept. 27 in the main streets of Belgrade in what should be called the most peaceful and original pride parade, very similar to the time of Stonewall.

Soon after they learned that authorities banned the pride the activists were promptly organized and around 11 p.m. they gathered in hundreds in front of the Prime Minister office.

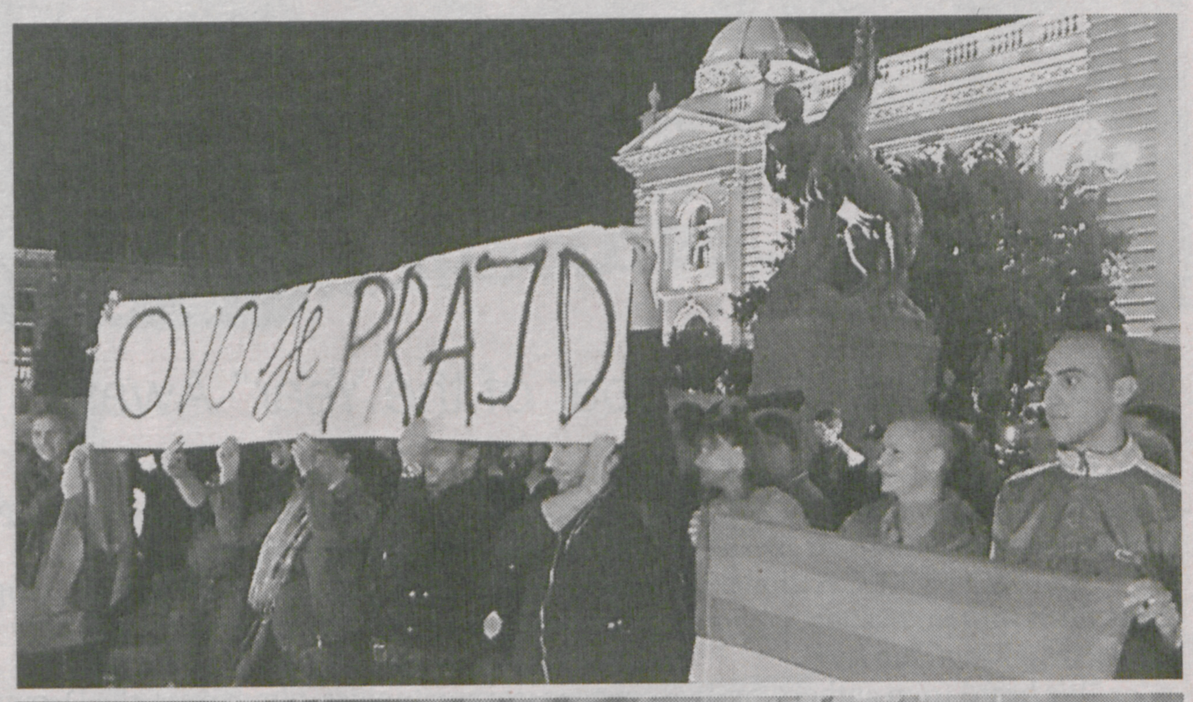
The police was there immediately but they could not stop anymore the activists who started to march in the streets joyfully and shouting "We don't give up!"

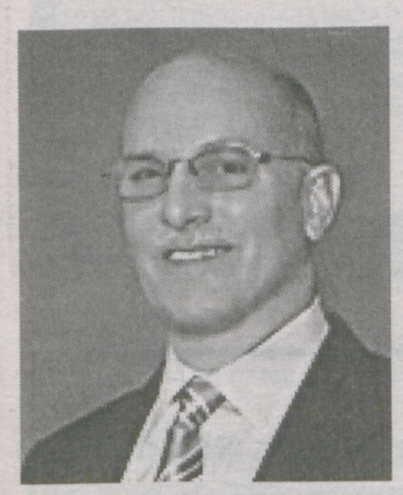
Later Ivica Dacic PM, as he did one year ago, stated that for "security reasons" the pride could not be held.

It is important to ask him now: where were the extremists when the activists marched and stood enough time in front of the symbolic building of the Parliament?!

"There are no more workshops and conferences inside! This is the real activism", said a girl from Belgrade.

During all the parade that started as a protest the activists were joyful and they should: it was the most peaceful, beautiful and probably the first real pride parade in the history of Belgrade.





Boggs

Loveland

Imboden

FAB Honorees Feted by Community Center

Nov. 9 the LGBT Community Center feted its 2013 FAB Honorees. Three individuals and one school district were recognized for their work on LGBT issues.

Honoree Russ Boggs, was founding president/CEO of Central PA Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, where he held that office for more than five years and currently serves as the organization's treasurer.

Boggs, noted his award biography "has worked tirelessly to build partnerships with large companies and other chambers. One of the greatest things about Russ is he is constantly encouraging others to join him in this important work. His dedication inspires others to get active. This insures that the legacy of his work will live on because he makes sure others are engaged and will continue building positive change for our community."

Honoree Rachel Imboden, is a mentor and supervisor, Common Roads volunteer, and community educator.

"Rachel has dedicated a significant amount of time to the region's LGBT youth by serving as a long-time facilitator of Common Roads safe space meetings by volunteering as a community educator. Rachel has also provided five Master of Social Work students with field supervision at The LGBT Center," noted her award bio.

Honoree Carlisle Area School District is first in the Commonwealth to have a gay-straight alliance student group.

The award program noted: "In the past year we have seen several schools in the region try to block and keep out gay-straight alliances (GSA's) and produce a climate of intolerance within their communities, but not CASD. The district was the first in Pennsylvania to create a GSA in 2001. The district actively includes sexual orientation as part of its equity statement, even when this is not required law."

The center also honored Barry Loveland with a special Common Roads Award commemorating the youth program's 20th anniversary.

The award program noted: "A longtime LGBT community leader in the region, Barry initiated the youth group that became Common Roads by inviting Sharon Potter to facilitate it, writing a small grant to get it started, and oftentimes helping out with the weekly meetings. The group has grown over its 20 years to three weekly meeting spaces for LGBT youth, support for gay-straight alliances including an annual leadership summit, and cultural competency training for high schools, colleges, and social service agencies."

To Russia With Love:

"I am a human being and not propaganda"

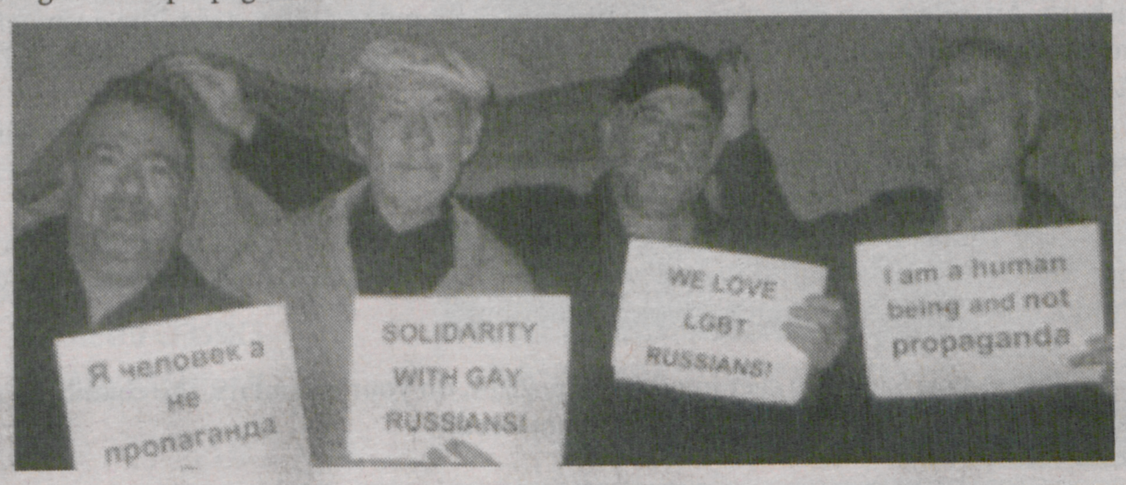
Led by Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), a bipartisan group of lawmakers sent a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry asking for protection of LGBT rights at the 2014 Olympic games in Russia. There have been conflicting reports about whether the country's strict anti-gay law would be enforced for visiting athletes and guests.

Russian Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko stated this week that athletes and spectators attending the 2014 Sochi Olympics would be held accountable to the country's anti-gay laws, but just one day later, Igor Ananskikh, deputy chairman of the State Duma's Physical Culture, Sport and Youth Policy Committee, said "a decision has been made not to raise this issue during the Olympics."

The International Olympics Committee has said the laws would not affect athletes.

In part the letter stated: "The United States must do everything we can to protect those Americans who are traveling to Russia for the Olympic and Paralympic Games this winter. Russia's anti-LGBT laws defy basic human rights that should be guaranteed to everyone at all times and in all places," Nadler said, according to a release. "These laws are completely contrary to the uniting spirit of the Olympics, which brings diverse nations together in a spirit of peaceful and friendly competition."

From the left, Central Voice contributor Michael Petrelis, Sir Ian McKellen, Mike Merrigan, and Sean Mathias. Petrelis' sign in Russian says "I am a human being and not propaganda".



Chamber on the move

By Bill Krenz, Vice President

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA
GAY AND LESBIAN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Reflecting on "Chamber of the Year" Award

Deb McClain, President and CEO of the Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (CPGLCC) found her recent trip to Dallas, TX to accept the CPGLCC Chamber of the Year Award a humbling and inspiring experience.

"The 2013 NGLCC National Business & Leadership Conference held July 30 – Aug. 2 was filled with innovation, empowerment, business and leadership development and connectivity," McClain said.

"We heard from authors, business owners, corporate allies, filmmakers, the Deputy Associate Administrator for Field Operations for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and other minority Chamber leaders from across the country."

"It was especially meaningful to be awarded the NGLCC Affiliate Chamber of the Year in front of the other 51 NGLCC affiliates from around the world -- CPGLCC's second National Award in as many years," McClain said.

Being invited to speak for the second year in a row at the National conference, "bringing recognition from across the country to Central Pennsylvania," was an honor, McClain said. "We are being the change… building business and creating community."

Opportunities to strengthen and grow that community included Match-Making Sessions for the LGBT Business Enterprise, which enabled certified suppliers to connect with large corporate partners for business growth and to develop relationships with other LGBTBE's for partnering on contracts," McClain said.

"We also witnessed Wells Fargo donating $1 million to the NGLCC for the Supplier Innovation Center being built in the home office in Washington, DC, and were proud to share that our own SunWorks, LLC is providing a custom countertop with the NGLCC logo inlayed for this project as well," McClain said.

Board member Scott Strait, who traveled with McClain to Dallas, commented, "The five-day conference was incredibly beneficial to me. I made so many great connections through the networking opportunities."

Strait said he also gained greater insight into additional chamber focal points such as the LGBTBE certification, membership retention, chamber marketing, and event planning.

"The experience was a great opportunity and I am pleased to apply this to our mission," Strait said.

Kit Nease, CEO and President of 1STCHOICEFG, and one of the Central Pennsylvania LGBTBE's certified businesses, who were also present in Dallas, found it "a very beneficial opportunity to collaborate with so many other LGBTBE-certified member owners on various future business ventures."

Past Events

The chamber held a mixer Sept. 19 at The Paper Lion Gallery in Lemoyne to another large crowd.

Hosts Jim Hadfield and Bill Grace discussed their latest featured gallery artists and conducted a tour of Jimmy Betz's "The Bohouse," which displayed European antiques and fine art. The occasion also served as the springboard for a good discussion regarding overall LGBTBE (LGBT Business Enterprise) Certification.

Alder Health Services' Lancaster Office was open for tours during the chamber's Oct. 17 mixer. Agency representatives discussed Alder's latest project, The Tree House at Alder Health, a program to assist homeless LGBT youth.

Future Events

The next mixer is Thurs., Nov. 14, at Goldcrafters Corner on Jonestown Road, Harrisburg. Attendees can get a start on their holiday shopping at this store. The event will be hosted by owner, designer, and goldsmith Stephanie Long, whose shop also features other American artists' works.

Chamber members attended the annual FAB gala Nov. 9. Members applaud our past President and CEO, and current Treasurer, Russ Boggs, who is one of the 2013 FAB Honorees.

The Thurs., Dec. 12 mixer will be a special holiday event hosted by the Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus & Central Pennsylvania Womyn's Chorus at The Jay & Nancy Krevsky Production Center on Hurlock Street in Harrisburg.

March 8, 2014

Please save Saturday evening, March 8, 2014, on your calendars, the chamber's Annual Dinner and Meeting. Details to be announced.

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Americans for Workplace Opportunity staff Jane Slusser, left. and Jake Stevens who are traveling Pennsylvania collaborating with organizations on workplace LGBT discrimination issues.

Employment Discrimination

A group gathering in Harrisburg to learn about the LGBT non-discrimination bill now working its way through the US Senate.

Often heard in the LGBT community buzz is a debate over marriage equality versus employment discrimination and why rush to support one over the other. Employment discrimination affects all LGBT people. Not all gay individuals want to get married.

"Right now we're supporting ENDA even though we also recognize that marriage equality is important to many Pennsylvanians," Adrian Shanker, Equality PA president tells *Central Voice*.

Right now 80% of Americans, including 70% of Republicans, agree that workplace discrimination against LGBT employees is wrong. And they agree on commonsense protections for LGBT people at work. "That's why it's time for congress to do something about it," Shanker says.

In Pennsylvania, there is Senate Bill 300 and house Bill 300, both aimed at eliminating employment based discrimination.

In the US Senate, there are plans to vote on protections. In 29 states it's legal to fire someone for being gay, including Pennsylvania. In 33 states it's legal to fire someone for being transgendered.

"Here in Pennsylvania, we need to make sure that Sen. Toomey and Sen. Casey hear from you on this critical issue before they cast their vote," Shanker said.

Americans for Workplace Opportunity is traveling the country collaborating with state and local organizations around the issue of workplace discrimination. AWO and EPA held meetings in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Scranton, Philadelphia, Bethlehem, and Reading and elsewhere for a total of 13 meetings.

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